Marxism Today

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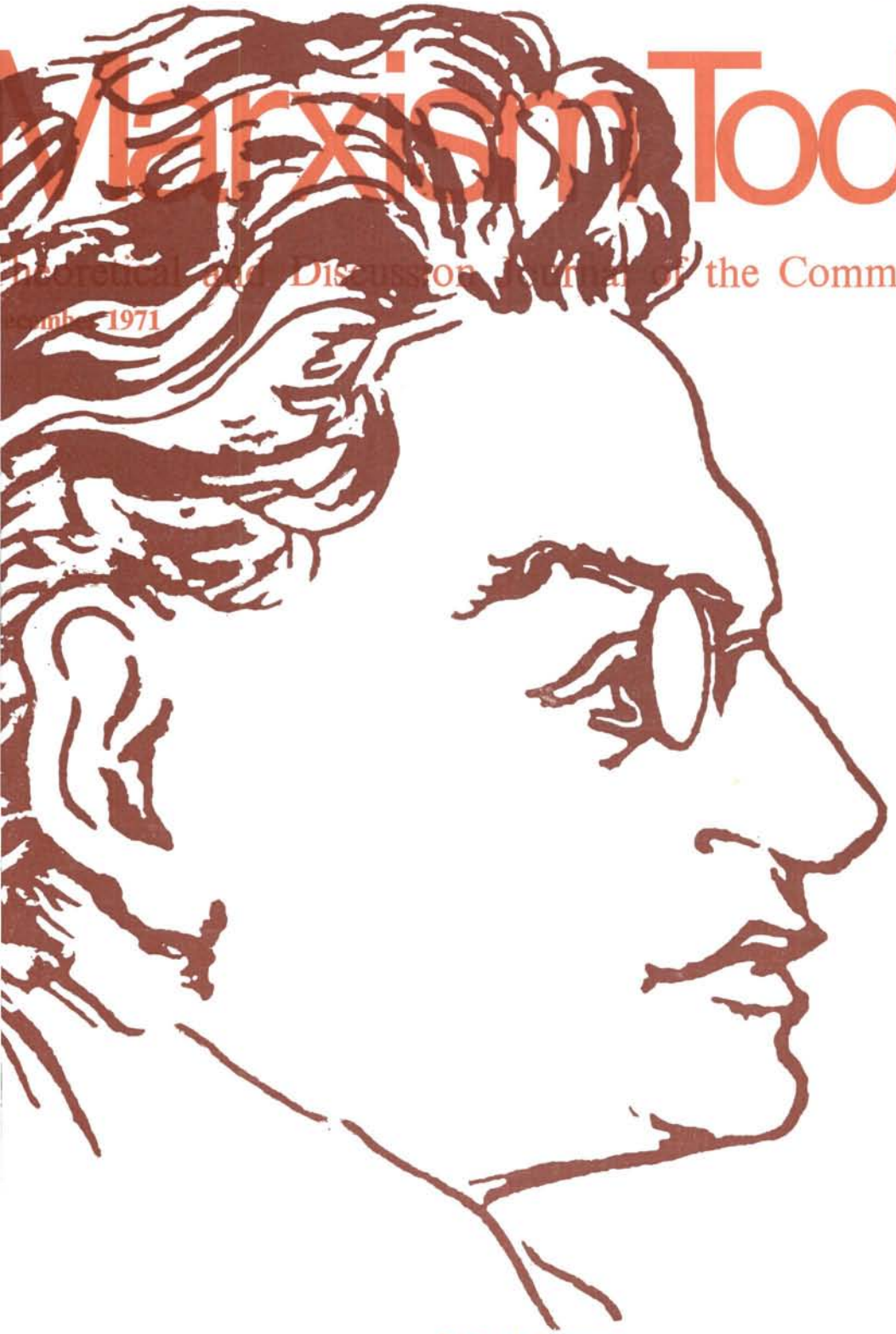

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MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Volume 15, Number 12

Editor James Klugmann

Editorial Board Professor J. D. Bernal Gabriel Garritt/Jack Cohen/Maurice Cornforth/Maurice Dobb John Foster/John Gollan/Arnold Kettle/John Mahon/Alan Morton/Bert Pearce/Michael Seifert/George Wake/Nick Wright

Editorial Correspondence James Klugmann, 16 King Street, WC2E 8HY

Advertisements Doris Allison, above address

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Editorial Comments

FOLLOWING THE VOTE in Parliament on October 28th, the anti-Market forces, and particularly the left within the Labour movement, are confronted with new problems.

It was thanks to the 89 MPs who flouted the decisions of the Labour Party Conference, to say nothing of the TUC and the will of the majority of the British people, that Heath obtained his majority and was saved from a defeat which would most likely have compelled his resignation and forced a new General Election.

Trades unionists and Labour Party members are entitled to ask what kind of consciences and principles these MPs have that they can put themselves above the movement and its democratic decisions by going into the lobby in support of a Tory Government which is attacking the trade unions, raising rents, taking milk away from school-children, and carrying out cold war policies.

However, the battle is not yet ended. The Tories and those who have chosen to betray the Labour movement can still be defeated. In the coming months the Government will bring before Parliament a great volume of legislation to bring British law into line with the Rome Treaty. This will afford the opportunity to fight for the reversal of the October 28th vote.

Wilson's declaration that he regards the vote as only the beginning is meaningless without a lead to mobilise at every stage of the struggle the broadest opposition outside Parliament, as well as in the House. This is the only way the Tories can be defeated.

Within the Labour movement there is anger against those in the leadership of the Parliamentary Labour Party who broke the ranks. Demands are being made for their resignations, and a number of Constituency Labour Parties are considering adopting other candidates in place of those who voted with the Tories.

The desire of the rank and file to assert the supremacy of the Conference over the Parliamentary Party is a welcome development. From the very early days of the Labour Party, MacDonald and his successors in the leadership sought to make the Parliamentary Party independent of and above the mass movement outside Parliament. The left forces within the movement have succeeded in winning progressive policy decisions. But the right wing's control of the machine and its ideological grip bars the way to the effective mobilisation of the working class and its allies in the fight for the new militant policies.

The events of recent weeks have brought to the fore the need for the left to initiate a greater degree of united activity aimed at both winning the movement for policies which advance the fight for socialism, change the character of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and bring it under control of the Conference.

THE UCS STRUGGLE *

The struggle of the UCS workers has evoked interest, sympathy and support on an unprecedented scale, and for very good reasons. It is of historic significance; unique in form and inspiring in content and conduct.

The decision to "work-in" is historic and unique in that it is the first time that any section of workers in Britain—or indeed anywhere—has adopted this form of struggle. It has many lessons and advantages of general validity. It overcame the difficulty that a strike in this given situation could have played into the hands of a Government whose stated intention was to close the yards. A sit-in could also have given the Government an excuse for attacking the workers on the grounds that they were obstructing work on ships under construction. It would also have been difficult to maintain in scale over a protracted period.

The decision to work-in overcame these difficulties, matched precisely the demand of the workers for the "right to work" almost by definition, and won immediate public sympathy and support.

* As we write, the UCS fight impacts yet another area of struggle and history, with the election of Jimmy Reid as Rector of Glasgow University. The first ever Communist. The first ever shop steward. Previous rectors have included: Lord Reith, Lord Butler, Stanley Baldwin, William Gladstone, Benjamin Disraeli, and Sir Robert Peel. Now add: Jimmy Reid, Shop Steward, Communist.

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It provided time for the workers to develop a campaign of solidarity of national—indeed international—proportions.

It gave them control of everything and everyone entering or leaving the yards, thus ensuring the retention of the yards as fully equipped operational units.

It retained workers in struggle in daily contact with each other and their leadership—rather than dispersed, and meeting only at intervals.

It has demonstrated to all, the responsibility, discipline and latent managerial capacities of workers, and shown that real social ownership is not only desirable, but practical.

It has restored both the pride of the working class and its faith in its own ability, eroded by decades of Tory and right wing social democratic denigration of working class, socialist ideals.

It has built a new unity embracing every level of the trade union movement, the Labour and Communist Parties, and every section of the community, in which disruptive divisions and proscriptions have been swept aside as irrelevancies by this tide of working class MASS ACTION.

VOICES OF RESISTANCE

A new paperback has just appeared which will spur on the campaign to save the life of Angela Davis and those of all other black and coloured victims of racist "justice" in the USA.[1]

Sub-titled "Voices of Resistance", the book highlights the conditions which result in Black Americans developing such desperate resistance to the policy of genocide practised by America's ruling class—in contributions by Angela Davis, the late George Jackson, Ruchell Magee, Huey Newton, Ericka Huggins, Bobby Seale, James Baldwin and many others.

Angela's contributions however, go much further and raise a number of important political and theoretical questions of vital interest to the entire movement.

She says there is a disintegration of the entire apparatus of the bourgeois democratic State, expressed especially in its judicial system and prisons, which under present class relations, can no longer be reformed.

Of particular importance is her comment on the role of the so-called criminal and lumpen-proletariat in the revolutionary struggle. She quotes Marx, who said of these that they are capable of "the most heroic deeds and the most exalted sacrifices, as of the basest banditry and the dirtiest corruption" and says that too many remember only the latter half of Marx's observation. She emphasises the permanent joblessness of 30 per cent of her people and how "society has objectively reduced their possibilities of survival" to breaking property laws. She also points to the large number of innocent Black people sent to prison; how more and more are beginning to question the social system and developing a revolutionary outlook, reflected in the political demands of the inmates during various prison "riots".

FASCISM IN AMERICA?

Angela takes issue with the late George Jackson's view that "fascism has securely established itself in power" in America, saying "While there can be no doubt that we are headed in a fascist direction . . . fascism has not yet consolidated itself" and "the fascist threat must be resisted by the broadest possible coalition in its incipient stages, before it has an opportunity to consolidate its power".

Very important is her stress, too often ignored or made fun of by ultra-leftists among Black people, that "We should seek out all the doors which still remain ajar" and "not be afraid to exhort people to initiate petition campaigns, mass rallies, demonstrations, block meetings. . . . It is a mark of immaturity of the revolutionary to dismiss such actions as 'reformist' or 'liberal'. . . ."

She begins to discuss why Black Americans have a greater revolutionary potential than whites. While saying that Blacks alone may be able to "unleash enough violence to bring the country to its knees" she also says that this is not social revolution, in contrast, emphasises "we must inevitably draw the conclusion that our thrust towards liberation must be organically bound up with the movement involving large numbers of white people . . . particularly whites at the point of production".

While recognising that the development of Black-White unity is as yet very tenuous because of the way racism has been embedded in the social fabric of America, she concludes with the controversial statement that "the issue of Black-white unity can be resolved only by recognising the necessity

[1] *If They Come in the Morning*, by Angela Davis and others: Orbach and Chambers, in association with the Angela Davis Defence Committee: 45p.

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for Black people to provide the leadership for the total struggle".

Of major importance in developing the defence movement in Britain to free Angela and all political prisoners, is her emphasis that "an effective defence movement cannot be the arena for ideological struggle, whose appropriate place is elsewhere".

Everyone should read this important book, already in its second edition one week after publication.

WEST GERMAN REACTION ON THE MOVE

The Conference of the West German Christian Democratic Party (CDU/CSU) held in Saarbrucken last month marked an intensified swing to the Right by that already sufficiently right-wing Party.

A new "strong man", the tough, ultra-reactionary Rainer Barzel replaced the more suave Kiesinger as Chairman of the party. The Congress was marked by extreme reactionary nationalist attacks on every move towards peace and *detente*—especially on the Warsaw and Moscow Treaties and on the Four-Power Agreement on West Berlin.

It was the same with regard to home policy. Barzel spelled this out in his speech when he defined this as commitment to private property, employers' initiative, profit and competition. This is a demagogic cover for the sharpest possible opposition to all efforts to secure improved living standards, social changes and democratic reforms. It is characteristic of this whole reactionary policy that Barzel in his first speech as Chairman declared that one of the main preoccupations of the Christian Democrats will be to attack the constitutional rights of the German Communist Party (DKP) and of its members, with the aim of banning it as an unconstitutional party. This is to be linked with an attempt to get Communists barred from employment in the public services.

This and other events—the recent conference of SS men in Bavaria—Nazis and war-criminals to a man—emphasise the need for the closest unity of all working class and progressive forces in the German Federal Republic. Nazism was smashed in 1945—but at enormous cost; but what nourished it—the biggest monopolists and reactionary chauvinist and nationalist parties—are still alive and working to alter all that humanity gained by Hitler's defeat.

GERMAN SOCIALIST STUDENTS UNDER ATTACK

Once again left-wing Socialist students in Western Germany are in trouble with the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party (SPD). Some years ago the SPD student organisation broke with the party because of basic disagreements over policy. The organisation they developed—the German Socialist Students Association (SDS) although tending to be anti-Communist and anti-Soviet, nevertheless played a notable part in developing the mass struggle against the war in Vietnam, and over the democratisation of the West German educational system as well as playing a leading part in the struggle against reaction everywhere. It dissolved itself some time ago, seeing no future for itself apart from the organised Labour Movement.

Recently a new student organisation—the Social Democratic Students League (SHB) was formed as an integral part of the SPD. This is now at odds with the official party, some leaders of which are attacking it because of its attitude on the Vietnam war, its desire to fight against the Emergency Decrees, and above all for its readiness to work with the Marxist student organisation called Spartakus and anyone else willing to fight for agreed aims.

The Right Wing SPD leaders have raised the hoary old legend that the SHB is "led by Communists".

The students have defined their attitude to the Social Democratic Party at conferences held in 1970, and in May this year. This is that the SHB is part of the Social Democratic Movement, that it fights for a democratic organisation of education and science and that it is ready to work for these aims with all other organisations which agree with them.

It is supported in this stand by the Social Democratic Youth Organisation (JUSO). Let us hope that this time good sense will prevail and that the big stick will be kept for beating the enemies of Socialism.

CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN HUNGARY

Some developments of very great theoretical and practical importance have been taking place in the co-operative section of the socialist world. This of course includes, besides co-operative and collective farms (the terms are interchangeable), consumers, housing, credit, fishing, handicraft, and many other co-operative activities, but in the

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socialist countries the agricultural part predominates even over the consumers' organisation, a situation rather unfamiliar to us with our consumer dominated movement.

Some weeks ago, the Hungarian Parliament passed a law which declared that co-operative property has a status in no way inferior to that of state, nationally owned property. Hitherto, the general opinion has been, both in the socialist countries and in the Labour movement generally, that co-operative property belonging to the group concerned in its operation, was inferior to state property, which owns the property of the whole people, and this was not without practical consequences. It was further considered that co-operative farm property represented only a temporary stage on the way to full state ownership, a kind of concession to the backward property orientated outlook of the peasants.

The whole question was the first item on the agenda of a conference of the Co-operative Research Institutes of the European Socialist Countries held in Budapest early in October. All the countries were represented except the GDR, including Yugoslavia (and our own comrade Jack Dunman was present as an observer). In fact, only Hungary and Poland have specifically Co-operative Institutes, but the other countries were represented by prominent economists and organisers active in the field.

CO-OPERATIVES AND THE ECONOMIC REFORM

The Conference was opened by Comrade Nyers, a Secretary in the Hungarian United Socialist Workers Party, and heads of delegations were received for discussion by Prime Minister Feher, who had been concerned with the Hungarian legislation. It did not represent governments and did not take decisions, but the representatives of all the countries enthusiastically supported the Hungarian move, and expressed agreement with the considerations behind it.

The chief of these was connected with the Economic Reform, and the problems with which it seeks to deal: the difficulties of over-centralisation, the need to provide workers with genuine facilities for participation in the management of their enterprises, and the incentive problem. It was enthusiastically recognised that co-operative forms of organisation have a built-in element of self-government and incentives which have to be provided artificially, as it were, in nationalised undertakings. In agriculture, the state form would not supplant the co-operative, but the two forms would move towards each other, each adopting features of the other.

The practical effects of the change are important; workers will no longer feel that by joining a co-operative enterprise they are doing something slightly inferior, and the governments will no doubt have it in mind when working out their investment priorities.

The conference discussion centred on agriculture: but clearly the principles can and will be applied in the other co-operatives also.

Jack Dunman adds that the atmosphere of hard hitting debate, with no punches pulled, warm friendship, and willingness to listen to other points of view, was a heart-warming experience.

British co-operators will no doubt be encouraged by this recognition of the importance of their activities in the building of socialism.

A NEW BOOK ON MARXISM

Dr. David McLellan has put us once again in his debt. To the series of studies on the writings of Marx which he has published over the last few years—*The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx; Karl Marx: The Early Texts;* and, more recently, Marx's *Grundrisse,* he has now added a new and stimulating book.[2] This is a complete summary of Marx's thought, in a sequence of key extracts from his writings from 1837 to 1882. Each extract is preceded by a short biographical note to indicate the circumstances in which Marx reached his conclusions, and each is followed by a short and pithy commentary. The second part of the book takes some of the basic themes of Marxism, i.e. Alienation; Historical Materialism; Labour; Class; the Party; the State; Revolution; Future Communist Society; and expounds them with the help of extracts from the relevant texts.

It seems surprising that Dr. McLellan although he deals with the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the section on The State, has not included it as a section in its own right, since Marx emphasised that this was his major contribution to Socialist thought.

Some of the commentaries will undoubtedly stimulate controversy and discussion, and this is all to the good.

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[2] *The Thought of Karl Marx:* An Introduction by Dr. David McLellan: MacMillan: Hardback £3.50: Paperback £1.50.

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This book is going to be an essential source of reference for all students of Marxism for a long time to come.

MARXIST SCIENTISTS DISCUSS

The Report of the Science and Technological Section of the Communist University of London is a most interesting account of what transpired during the course of a week of lectures on science at the Communist University held earlier this year.[3]

This section arranged its discussions around the following fundamental idea:

> "The involvement of Marxists in issues of science and technology from questions of philosophy and theory to those of practical application and social implication, is a matter of some urgency".

This section of the Communist University attracted radical scientists (both students and workers) from many fields and the topics tackled ranged from the philosophy and theory of science, its social function, the role of the scientist in social change and the problems of scientists in a revolutionary perspective. Consideration of specific areas such as the chemical industry, molecular biology, psychology, computers, etc., attempted to include problems both of theory and social relevance and impact.

Sixteen sessions on these topics were held. The final session was devoted to a review of what had taken place and to a discussion of the next steps in building and sustaining Marxist initiative in science and technology. It was decided that the University should not be seen as an isolated event but as part of a continuing activity on these issues.

Steps are being taken to activise science groups to continue the practice and develop the theory, and to produce some kind of bulletin co-ordinating and stimulating discussion and activity.

PICASSO 90

Articles about Picasso have filled the world press on the occasion of his 90th birthday. There have been meetings galore, radio and TV programmes at which his unique contribution to modern painting has been praised. There is not much left for us to say except to emphasise that Picasso's name will always be linked not only with modern art but with the fight for peace, that Picasso was not only the greatest artistic genius of the century, but one of the outstanding fighters for human progress, against tyranny and oppression and for socialism. And finally that Picasso was and remains a member of the Communist Party.

Let him speak for himself and explain what his art means to him:

> "What then do you think an artist is? Some kind of imbecile who only has eyes if he is a painter, ears if he is a composer, a lyre for all layers of the human heart if he is a poet, only muscles if he is a boxer? Quite the contrary! He is a political being who lives always conscious of heart-rending, burning or benificent world events and forms and moulds himself according to their image. How can one not take part along with one's fellow human beings; seperate oneself in an ivory tower of indifference from a life which confronts one so super-abundantly? No, painting was not invented in order to decorate houses. It is a weapon of attack and defence against the enemy".

INTELLIGENCE, PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Reviews of Professor Brian Simon's book *Intelligence, Psychology and Education*[4] recently printed in the educational press, have underlined the vital importance of the issues it raises in the struggle for comprehensive education today.

Teachers World has pointed out that old arguments are "being revived in an attempt to slow down and effectively to limit the comprehensive development". This is evidenced by the time and space that was devoted by TV and Press to boosting recent work of Eysenk, who is actively reviving discredited ideas of innate "intelligence", and Jensen, who holds forth about the inferiority of inferior races.

Recommending Professor Simon's book, the reviewer writes: "Let no-one be put off by the book's subtitle "A Marxist Critique". Marxist it may well be: if so, we could do with more of Simon's brand of Marxism in education. No, what the teacher will find here is first, an intelligent and learned demolition of the case of those who seek to limit educational opportunity on any grounds whatever, be they of race, birth, sex, class or so-called intelligence; and second, a most convincing restatement of the need to give a full secondary education to *all* pupils, and to expand and extend

[3] Available from Fergus Nicolson, 16 King Street, London W.C.2: 10p.

[4] *Intelligence, Psychology and Education*, by Brian Simon: Lawrence & Wishart: £3.

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educational opportunity as fast as possible".

The review concludes: "Perhaps the most valuable chapter is the one entitled "Intelligence, Race, Class and Education". In it, with an impressive display of learning, he utterly destroys Jensen's case and, by implication, that of those at present arguing similarly in this country, and whose number, encouraged by Mrs. Thatcher and the revivified elitists at the DES, is steadily growing".

It was Brian Simon, with other Communists, who first opened up the attack on the whole "intelligence testing" system in our schools. The battle is not by any means won yet, though advances have been made which, as *Teachers World* says, "cannot be halted even by Mrs. Thatcher and her cohorts". All those concerned about educational advance and the beating back of the powerful, counter-offensive now being mounted by diehard educational reactionaries, will find in this book by Professor Simon a most potent supply of information and argument.

A NEW BOOK ABOUT BRITISH SOCIALISM

The Publishing House for Political Literature in Moscow recently brought out a new book by Andrew Rothstein, *V. I. Lenin and the Socialist Movement in Great Britain,* written at the publishers' request in connection with the Lenin centenary last year. It traces in nineteen chapters the development of Lenin's views on the subject, from 1888-89, when he became acquainted with Marx's historical analysis of British capitalism in volume I of *Capital* and with Engels' *Condition of the English Working Class in 1844*, right up to a letter of December, 1921, in which Lenin commented sarcastically on a request by Labour Party leaders that the Red Army should be withdrawn from Georgia.

The book differs from the anthologies published at various times under the title of *Lenin and Britain,* in that it traces at each stage the bearing of Lenin's remarks either on the struggle of the Bolshevik Party against its political opponents in Russia or on problems arising in the international working class movement, including of course this country. Some of the material used in the book has been published only in the latest volumes of Lenin's works.

At the end the writer sums up in twelve points the thoughts suggested to an old Communist by a study of Lenin's opinions over thirty years on Socialism in Britain. Translated from the English manuscript by one of the most competent hands in the USSR, Djavad Sharif, the book appeared in 10,000 copies and was, we learn, immediately sold out.

TED WILLIS THAT WAS

Many of us who participated in the Popular and United Front Movements which were built around the great anti-fascist struggles of the 1930's (Spain, anti-Mosley, opposition to fascism, Chamberlain and Munich, as well as the fight against unemployment) will remember Ted Willis, now Lord Willis of Chislehurst.

Joining the Labour League of Youth in his late teens, Ted, after trying many jobs, found his place in the political movement. Showing great speaking, writing, organising and administrative ability, he was selected by the late Lord (Herbert) Morrison as one who could become a future Labour prime minister "if he behaved himself",—that is, if he did not move to the Left. But Ted was too honest and too sincere a youth to allow himself to be influenced and deflected by this tempting perspective.

Appointed the national leader of the Labour League of Youth, he became deeply impressed by the Communist Party, its policies and the self-sacrificing activities of its members, and he fought hard to swing the LLY towards the Young Communist League, then led by John Gollan to whom he pays tribute. The full story of this and the other fights against the right-wing which took place in the 1930's is told in the first part of his deeply moving autobiography "Whatever Happened to Tom Mix" (Cassell, 42/-).

So hard did Ted fight to swing the LLY towards the left that he, together with the National Advisory Committee of the LLY, were suspended, whilst the annual conference was cancelled. His response was to resign and join the YCL at the same time calling on the NAC and the rest of the LLY membership to follow him into the ranks of the Party. This many did.

Of this period Ted writes:

> "We did not accept the world as it was, and we put what strength we had to the task of changing it for the better. We did not sit down to weep over our miseries . . . and if we made mistakes we made them for the right reason, for the last accusation that can be made against us is that our motives were selfish. What we did we believed we were doing for mankind."

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Born into an impoverished working class family, living in the "better" part of a slum (Ted's father worked for London Transport and stood to attention, cap in hand, when spoken to by Lord Ashford), Ted Willis gives a first-hand account of the suffering, privations and the fighting qualities of the working class during the first half of the twentieth century. A similar story can be told of most of those who built the labour movement in those years.

If there is a heroine in this book it is Ted's mother, whose greatest ambition in life was to have a house with a bathroom. She emerges as the prototype of the working class "mum" —selfless, self-sacrificing, warm, deeply human and humane but blessed with a core of steel which provided the first nucleus round which the family coalesced. Today Ted Willis sits in the House of Lords as an honourable and respected member of the Labour Party which brought him back into its fold when he left the Communist Party.

Although this has not prevented him from paying tribute to such Communists as John Gollan and the late Willie Gallacher, nevertheless it would have been better had he not allowed his present views about the Communist Party to creep into what otherwise is a book that very definitely deserves to be read.

THE CORNISH CLAY STRIKE IN 1913

We are always glad to receive from correspondents documents, old leaflets and posters, as well as reminiscences of the strikes and struggles of earlier days.

We are grateful to Mr. William Clarke of St. Austell, Cornwall, for sending us a description (in verse) of the Cornish China Clay Strike of 1913. The strike took place between late July and early October under the courageous leadership of C. R. Vincent, an organiser of the Workers' Union. When the strike started other organisers—Matt Giles, Joe Harris, John Beard, George Goeby and Julia Varley were sent to assist.

The strikers demanded 25s. per week, standardised pay and hours, fortnightly pay (instead of monthly) and union recognition. After ten weeks they had to retreat, but as the editor of the verses remarks "all who took an active part knew they had left their footsteps on the sands of time".

The verses, in the true old broadsheet tradition, were written by a clay worker, and sold on the streets, the proceeds to be given to the Central Strike Fund.

The strike opened:

Well, the men at Carne Stents were the first to down tools,
And for taking that action were counted as fools.
But you see their policy proved a blessing in disguise,
And has proved to the world that those men were wise.

The strikers moved on from pit to pit bringing the men out as they went:

Halviggan from there was reached pretty soon,
By the time we got there the hour had reached noon.
We came unawares and caught the men in a bunch,
Who had gathered in the lodge and were eating their lunch.
After stating our business and why we were out,
The pasties were put away and the men gave a shout.

Pit after pit, quarry after quarry came out:

By this time we were five or six hundred strong,
It almost scared the poor women as the crowd passed along.
After a long march we reached St. Austell town,
When the employers were meeting we were marching around.
We made for the Fair Park and had a big demonstration,
As we listened to our Champion 'twas a great consolation.
The meeting was over and I would just like to say,
In the china clay area it was a red letter day.

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The Prison Notebooks of Gramsci

James Harvey

In the autumn of 1926, when the world's first fascist regime had been in power for four years, Mussolini decided to put an end to the semblance of bourgeois democracy that survived. All the opposition organisations and their publications were banned and a massive new series of arrests was launched. Among those arrested was Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci was a member of parliament and had also, since August 1924, been the general secretary of the Italian Communist Party. He was 35 years old. At his trial in 1928 the official prosecutor ended his peroration with the famous demand to the judge: "we must stop that brain working for 20 years!" Yet although Gramsci was to die in 1937, long before those 20 years were up, his health broken by the terrible regime in prison, his jailers did not succeed in stopping his brain from working. The product of those years of slow death in prison were the 33 notebooks containing 2,848 pages of handwritten notes which were smuggled out of Italy after his death.

When they were published in Italy after the war (together with his moving *Letters from Prison*, justly acclaimed as an outstanding contribution to modern Italian literature) the originality of Gramsci's thought created a deep impression, and the reputation of the Prison Notebooks has steadily grown throughout the world revolutionary movement as selections from them have been successively translated into different languages. In 1957 Lawrence and Wishart published a selection entitled *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* edited and translated by Dr. Louis Marks.[1] This was a pioneering work of great value and has served as the only means of access to the Prison Notebooks in English for 15 years (though it is now out of print). Its main limitation derived from its brevity. Within the space of some 130 pages it was impossible to present a really adequate selection from the Notebooks, and passages of great importance had to be omitted. The impact of Gramsci's thinking on British Marxism has inevitably been limited by this fact. An appreciation of Gramsci has recently been greatly aided by the publication of John Cammett's book and of an English translation of Fiori's biography.[2] These books are particularly valuable for the light they throw on Gramsci's life and political activity before his arrest. But they do not add to the amount of the text of the Prison Notebooks available in English.

The position has now been transformed by the publication by Lawrence and Wishart of a new and much more comprehensive selection from the Prison Notebooks, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith.[3] It is now possible for the first time for British Marxists to make a serious and scientific study of Gramsci's thought which, in conjunction with his practical political activity before his arrest, has played such a crucial part in the growth of the Italian Communist Party and in the spread of Marxist ideas in Italy.

This volume, which runs to 477 pages of text plus an introduction by the editors of almost 100 pages, contains very nearly everything of importance in the Prison Notebooks concerning history, politics and philosophy. It opens with the notes on intellectuals, on education and on history; the central part of the book is devoted to political parties and the state, including the series of notes entitled "The Modern Prince"; this is followed by "Americanism and Fordism", in which Gramsci studied the changes taking place in contemporary capitalism (the introduction of Taylorism, etc); and the last part of the book contains the notes on philosophy and on the origins and nature of Marxism and its relation to other philosophies; and concludes with the long

[1] Reviewed in *Marxism Today*, November, 1957 by Professor George Thomson. This book also contained a translation of Gramsci's important article on the Southern Question which was unfinished at the time of his arrest in 1926.

[2] John M. Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (1967) now available in paperback (Stanford University Press, Oxford University Press). Guiseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci, Life of a Revolutionary* translated by Tom Nairn (New Left Books, 1970). A very useful survey of Gramsci's ideas, drawing on his articles before his arrest as well as on the Prison Notebooks, was published in the *Socialist Register 1968* by John Merrington entitled "Theory and Practice in Gramsci's Marxism".

[3] *Antonio Gramsci. Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* £6.

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series of notes on Bukharin's *Manual of Popular Sociology* (1921). The two long studies of Croce, the Italian philosopher who exercised such great influence in Italy, have not been included though important passages have been quoted as footnotes. And Gramsci's notes on literature and art have been reserved for a future volume containing his writings on cultural topics.

The Prison Notebooks

The Prison Notebooks bear the mark of the extraordinarily difficult conditions under which they were written. Many of the notes are fragmentary and unfinished, and some of the notebooks were re-written and revised by Gramsci but the work of revision was unfinished at the time of his death. In order to avoid arousing the suspicions of the prison censor Gramsci was compelled to exercise great caution in many of his references to actual events and personalities such as Marx and Lenin. Marxism is referred to throughout as the "philosophy of praxis", and conceptions such as class and dictatorship of the proletariat are concealed under innocent sounding titles. In addition the notes contain numerous references to Italian history and literature. The English reader needs therefore a good deal of editorial assistance in order that he can easily understand these obscure references, and this indispensable help has indeed been provided by the two editors with admirable thoroughness and scholarship. The quality of the translation is very high, and great care has been taken to give a consistent rendering of the special concepts and terms used by Gramsci. In addition, each section of the book is preceded by a short introduction in which the editors draw attention to the main problems with which Gramsci is concerned, in the notes comprising that section. They have also provided a historical introduction to the whole book.

This introduction, running to nearly 100 pages, may seem long to the reader anxious to plunge straight away into the Notebooks themselves, and indeed my only criticism is that it does perhaps give a rather too detailed account of the complex relationship between the Italian Communist Party and the Comintern in the early 1920s. But a fairly lengthy introduction was quite indispensable.

The Italian Background

As the editors say, Gramsci has perhaps "suffered more than any other Marxist writer from partial and partisan interpretation both by supporters and opponents; the Prison Notebooks themselves, read seriously and in all their complexity, are the best antidote to this." They have therefore rightly avoided any attempt to provide an interpretation of his thought, Instead, they have given an account of the main political experiences of Gramsci's life as a revolutionary—the class struggles in Turin centering round the factory councils and *Ordine Nuovo*, the formation of the Italian Communist Party, the rise of fascism and the strategic debates which took place in the party and the Comintern in those years. In the Notebooks Gramsci thinks back over his ten years of intense political activity preceding his arrest, seeking to understand the lessons of the defeat of the Italian working class by fascism so as to strengthen the Italian Communist Party (the "Modern Prince" in the notes on Macchiavelli).

In reading these Notebooks it should never be forgotten that they were written by a man, who, as Togliatti often emphasised, had shown extraordinary ability in the practical tasks of political leadership in his two years as general secretary of the Italian Communist Party. However abstract they may sometimes appear, they can only be properly understood in relation to Italian conditions and the events preceding his arrest. Untold confusion, and grave injustice to Gramsci, is caused by applying his ideas mechanically to other countries.

He was intensely conscious of the need to develop a Marxist theory and strategy suited to Italian history and traditions, and the whole of his active political life as well as the Prison Notebooks were an expression of this understanding. There are several passages in the Notebooks contrasting Russian conditions in 1917 with the quite different conditions prevailing in Italy in the early 1920s. In one of these, referring to the united front policy launched by the Comintern in December 1921 he wrote: "Lenin, however, did not have time to expand his formula—though it should be borne in mind that he could only have expanded it theoretically, whereas the fundamental task was a national one."[4] And elsewhere he wrote that, while the line of development is towards internationalism, "the point of departure is 'national'—and it is from this point of departure that one must begin."[5] This was in true succession to Lenin's own statement made in 1899, that Marx's theory had only laid the "foundation stone" of the science which socialists had to develop in all directions if they wished to keep pace with life itself, and that "an independent elaboration of Marx's theory is especially essential for Russian socialists."[6] Gramsci's great achievement was to lay the foundations for this independent elaboration which has enabled Marxism and the Italian Communist Party to grow deep roots in Italian Society.

Croce and the Intellectuals

Some knowledge of Gramsci's intellectual and political experience in the years before his arrest is

[4] *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 239.

[5] Ibid. p. 240.

[6] *Our Programme* (1889).

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therefore indispensable for understanding the Notebooks. His childhood, which was spent in Sardinia and was made very difficult through the poverty of his family and his own frail health, gave him a first-hand familiarity with the poverty-stricken life of the peasantry in Southern Italy and left him with a preoccupation about the "Southern Question" which was never to leave him for the rest of his life. In 1911 he won a scholarship to Turin university, sitting the examination at the same time as his future friend and fellow communist Togliatti, and made his first serious contact with the intellectual world of his time. Like many other socialist students he was deeply influenced at first by the idealist philosopher-historian Benedetto Croce, the most influential spokesman of speculative liberalism, whose ideas exercised a unique influence over Italian cultural life and over its political life as well.

In 1915 Gramsci joined the staff of the Socialist Party weekly *Il Grido del Popolo* and soon developed into a formidable political commentator; from 1916 on he also became the dramatic critic of the Socialist daily paper *Avanti*. In the meantime a study of the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin and also of the Italian Marxist Labriola, led him to reject Crocean idealism in favour of Marxism. But he retained a special interest in Croce to the end of his life, and in his prison writings he frequently refers to the need to combat Croce's influence "sometimes casting Croce in the role of a Dühring, to be polemically destroyed, but more often seeing him as comparable to Hegel as a thinker whose work could be profited from in the struggle to renew Marxist thought." (Introduction, p. xxiii). Croce was only the most prominent of the intellectuals who, taken as a whole, had occupied a position of exceptional importance in Italian society ever since the Middle Ages. Thus the whole question of the intellectuals was to become a major subject of Gramsci's reflections in prison.

Against Determinism

One element in Croce's thought which had attracted Gramsci was his criticism of the Positivist tradition in Italian thought. The adoption by Positivists for the purpose of the social sciences of a concept of science taken root and branch from the natural sciences, especially from physics, had helped to strengthen the trend among socialists towards determinism in the interpretation of history and the belief in the inevitable collapse of capitalism as a result of its internal contradictions. Gramsci, like Lenin before him, was in revolt against all forms of "economism", a revolt which was vividly expressed in his article in December 1917 entitled "The Revolution against Capital", greeting the Russian Revolution as a mighty blow against all fatalistic interpretations of Marxism and against the concept of "the iron timetable of the stages of history." Elements of economic determinism had become strongly embedded in the so-called Marxism of the Second International which was so influential in Germany and Central Europe (and among the Mensheviks in Russia) in the decades before the first world war, and of which Kautsky was the outstanding representative thinker.

This type of Marxism had been carried into Italy by Loria and others and had deeply influenced the Italian Socialist Party. In one of the best-known passages in his Prison Notebooks Gramsci says that the deterministic element has been a direct ideological "aroma" emanating from Marxism "rather like religion or drugs (in their stupefying effect)" which has been necessitated and historically justified by the subordinate position of the working class. When one does not have the initiative, determinism could become a tremendous force of moral resistance and of patient perseverance. "I am defeated for the moment but the tide of history is working for me in the long run." (p. 336) But it is essential at all times to demonstrate the futility of determinism; for while it is understandable as a naive philosophy of the masses, when it is adopted as a thought-out and coherent philosophy on the part of the intellectuals it becomes a cause of passivity and a substitute for the spirit of initiative.

In the Prison Notebooks Gramsci makes a searching analysis of different forms of determinism, such as "the doctrine according to which economic development is reduced to the course of technical change in the instruments of work" (an idea which has cropped up again in new shapes in connection with the scientific and technological revolution).

Bukharin's *Theory of Historical Materialism, A Manual of Popular Sociology*, published in 1921, attracted Gramsci's attention because it exhibited a strong tendency to identify Marxism with a type of economic determinism similar to that of Kautsky and Loria. He also criticised Bukharin for another failing, namely, a tendency to reformulate Marxism in an unhistorical and systematic manner and thus reduce it to a kind of sociology. It does indeed seem that there is a strong recurring tendency for Marxism to suffer from both these defects and therefore Gramsci's "Critical Notes on Bukharin", reproduced in full in this volume, are of great relevance today. They are also of great interest in view of the attempts now being made to incorporate elements of Marxism into the bourgeois sociology taught in the universities and schools, transforming it into a respectable academic discipline shorn of its revolutionary character. Gramsci insisted, on the contrary, that Marxism had to change and develop as the political struggle changed. He wrote: "Separated from the theory of history and politics, philosophy cannot be other than metaphysics, whereas the great conquest in the history of modern thought, represented by

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Marxism, is precisely the concrete historicisation of philosophy and its identification with history." (p. 436) Few will agree with all his controversial formulations in his Notes on Marxism and philosophy, especially some of his remarks on the nature of science and materialism, but personally I feel convinced that he gets much nearer to the right answers than do some of his critics, such as Althusser.[7]

"Ordine Nuovo"

Determinist ideas also played a part in creating the dominant trend within the Italian Socialist Party known as Maximalism, the Italian equivalent of the centrism which was an international phenomenon after the war. The party had refused to support the war, adopting a position of "neither support nor sabotage". In the turbulent years from 1917 to 1920 the Maximalist leaders used revolutionary language —indeed the party adhered to the Third International in 1919 and called for the installation of soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat—but they failed to put forward any concrete strategy for political action or to make serious attempts to organise the peasants and agricultural labourers in the South. It tended towards a merely negative, passive opposition.

In this situation Gramsci, together with Togliatti, Tasca and Terracini who had all been students with him at the university, founded in the summer of 1919 a weekly "review of socialist culture" in Turin. *Ordine Nuovo* reflected Gramsci's belief that a condition for successful revolutionary action was the development of a revolutionary culture among the working class and the journal retained this aspect throughout its existence. But its function was transformed when it put forward the idea that the shop committees, which had been set up during the war by the employers but were rapidly changing their character as the revolutionary spirit of the workers rose, could be the potential nucleus for the first stage of Italian "soviets".

Gramsci's main inspiration came of course from the Russian Revolution, but it is of particular interest to us in Britain that he had also been influenced by the wartime British shop stewards' movement as well as by the writings of Daniel de Leon, the theorist of the American "Wobblies". *Ordine Nuovo* played an essential part in the organisation of the factory councils which were set up in all the main factories in Turin in the next twelve months and it became the theoretical and organising journal of the working class struggle in the city.

Gramsci saw the factory councils as the embryo organs of the future Italian socialist state which would be utterly different from the existing parliamentary state. "Today, the factory councils limit the power of the capitalist in the factory and perform functions of arbitration and discipline. Tomorrow, developed and enriched, they must be organs of proletarian power, replacing the capitalist in all his useful functions of management and administration." They were to be institutions of the whole proletariat including the unorganised workers. Afterwards, in one of his Prison Notes, concerning the relation between spontaneity and conscious leadership, he wrote that the Turin movement "gave the masses a theoretical consciousness of being creators of historical and institutional values, of being founders of a state." (p. 198)

The reformists and centrists were driven out of the leadership of the trade unions and Socialist Party in Turin, but they still dominated the organised movement in the rest of the country. Thus when in April 1920 the employers challenged the factory councils in order to end "dual power" in the factories, the month-long strike of the metalworkers in Turin ended in a compromise because the Socialist leaders refused to support any call for solidarity in the rest of the country. And when the great revolutionary occupation of the factories broke out all over Italy in September, 1920, and factory councils sprang up everywhere on the Turin model, the movement was defeated by the passivity and defeatism of the national trade union and Socialist Party leaders.

Foundation of the Italian Communist Party

Gramsci subsequently summed up the achievement of *Ordine Nuovo* as having "known how to translate into the language of Italian history the principal themes of the doctrine and tactics of the Third International and having supported its programme inside the Socialist Party."[8] The programme of the Turin section of the Socialist Party written by Gramsci in May 1920 had indeed been singled out by Lenin for special approval at the Second Congress of the Comintern.

Utterly disillusioned with the Socialist Party Gramsci now lent his full support to the formation of a separate Communist Party which eventually came about in January 1921. But his absorption in the local struggle in Turin had delayed his recognition of the necessity to form a Communist Party freed from all reformist influence. For the previous two years the Neapolitan leader Bordiga had been campaigning for a separate Communist Party and on its formation he became the undisputed leader. His ideas, however, differed in many vital respects from those of Gramsci and the Comintern. The "abstentionist" group he had organised inside the Socialist Party had stood for abstention from all elections.

[7] See Althusser's *Reading Capital* recently published by New Left Books.

[8] *2,000 Pagine di Gramsci*, Vol. I p. 724.

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But the real gulf between Bordiga and the Comintern was "on the far more essential question of whether it was necessary to win the majority of the working class." (Introduction, p. xlii)

Bordiga believed that the party should above all conserve its purity and internal discipline. He was not interested in trying to win over the majority of the members of the Socialist Party because he was convinced of their irrevocable "centrism", and he disapproved of any mass movement, such as the Turin factory councils, which was not strictly controlled by the party. He was even opposed to the formation of factory cells. As Togliatti put it later, "Bordiga had transformed the party centre into a type of quartermaster's office and the members into the passive executors of orders." And as Gramsci wrote subsequently, Bordiga's mistake had been to give the first place to the problem of the organisation of the party, "which meant only to create an apparatus of functionaries who would be 'orthodox' towards the official conceptions."[9]

Gramsci was to develop these themes in his Prison Notebooks, especially in a note on bureaucracy where he distinguishes bureaucratic from democratic centralism. The latter had to be a "centralism in movement, i.e. a continual adaptation of the organisation to the real movement, a matching of thrusts from below with orders from above, a continuous insertion of elements thrown up from the depths of the rank and file into the solid framework of the leadership apparatus which ensures continuity and the regular accumulation of experience." And he added that "Democratic centralism offers an elastic formula, which can be embodied in many diverse forms; it comes alive in so far as it is interpreted and continually adapted to necessity." (p. 189)

The Rise of Fascism

This ultra-leftism of Bordiga, combined with his great ability, placed the Italian Communist Party under a grave handicap in the struggle with Mussolini's fascism. The party was founded in 1921 during the first period of widespread fascist terror, which culminated in the March on Rome in October 1922 and Mussolini's seizure of power, followed by a vast wave of repression. In later years it was easy to see that 1920 had been the crest of the post-war revolutionary wave in Europe. But it was not obvious at the time either to the leaders of the Comintern or the Italian Communist Party. The position of the Comintern was that there had been a temporary ebbing of the revolutionary tide, and in December 1921 it launched the policy of the united front, urging common action between the two Internationals and between rival left parties. The Italian Communist Party under Bordiga, however, completely rejected this united front policy which required them to work closely with the hated Maximalists of the Socialist Party, and the whole period up to 1924 was marked by a series of disagreements with the Comintern on this question.

In these conditions it was exceedingly difficult to arrive at a proper estimate of the nature of fascism and widely differing views were put forward. There was a general tendency to underestimate the danger it represented, but it was typical of Bordiga that he should take the extreme view that it was simply another form of bourgeois rule, no better and no worse than the social-democratic and parliamentary form, having introduced "no novel elements into traditional bourgeois politics or ideology", and therefore no novel strategy or tactics were required to defeat it.

Ordine Nuovo had to cease publication in 1922 and Gramsci went to Moscow as the Italian party's representative with the Comintern and later, after the arrest of Bordiga, moved to Vienna. For a variety of reasons it was not until the end of 1923 that he took the lead in the struggle against Bordiga's influence and set out to build a new leadership for the party based on the old *Ordine Nuovo* group. Having been elected to parliament in April 1924 Gramsci returned to Italy as leader of the party which was still solidly Bordigan in outlook.

His great achievement during the next two years was to free the party entirely from left-wing extremism and to lay the foundations for its later transformation into a mass party after the fall of fascism. In June 1924 the assassination of the Socialist deputy Matteotti in circumstances pointing to the complicity of the Government, threw the fascist regime into temporary disarray; but the Italian Socialist Party and the other opposition parties refused to join with the Communists in any effective action with the result that the Government, having recovered its strength, took the decisive step in November 1926 of proclaiming the emergency laws which prohibited all opposition political parties, and the Communist leaders were arrested.

The Italian working class had suffered a heavy defeat, and this formed the background to Gramsci's reflections in prison. He was perhaps the first great Marxist thinker and revolutionary leader to face up realistically to the problems created by the decline of the revolutionary upsurge after 1920. Why had the Italian working class failed after the Russian workers under Bolshevik leadership had succeeded? Gramsci was convinced that in the West a different strategy was required—a "war of position" as he put it, rather than a "war of movement". He set himself to work out the theory, and the strategy based on it, needed to enable the Italian Communist Party to lead the working class to victory in a war of position.

[9] Ibid. p. 671.

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The Gramscian Style

It is tempting to examine some of Gramsci's main ideas, especially his central concept of hegemony, but space does not allow. These ideas, however, are not his only contribution to Marxism. I believe that his style of thinking also added something of great and permanent value to Marxism. It is this which gives the notebooks so much of their distinction and characteristic flavour and makes them so fascinating and stimulating to read.

His writing possesses a special quality of realism, free from any kind of dogmatism and oversimplification. He was fond of quoting Romain Rolland's motto: pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will. There is a concern for finding the exactly right formulation, making all the necessary qualifications in a truly scientific spirit, which does not always make for easy reading. His approach is also completely free from sectarianism. Throughout his life he had opposed all forms of sectarianism, dogmatism or ultra-leftism which could narrow down the field of political activity and the opportunities for collaborating with other forces.

From the very beginning of his political life he opposed the sterile anti-clericalism which was widespread among Italian socialists, and he was always ready to engage in discussions with Catholic workers. During the Turin factory councils movement he collaborated with Anarchists and formed a very close relationship with Pieri Gobetti, the finest representative of the young liberals.

Gramsci's recognition of the crucial role of intellectuals, and of the necessity for a revolutionary party not only to create its own core of intellectuals, but also to win over as allies a decisive section of all intellectuals, is another illustration of his freedom from sectarianism.

His style of controversy is a basic element in his approach. He believed that discussion and controversy could only be fruitful if each side genuinely sought to understand his opponent's point of view. He was utterly opposed to the destructive style of criticism. He disagreed strongly with Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and with the policy of the Left Opposition led by Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev in 1926. But one of his last actions before his arrest was to write a letter to the Soviet Communist Party expressing the deep anxiety aroused among Italian Communists by the "violent manner" in which the Stalin-Trotsky controversy was being carried on.[10]

Later, in his Prison Notebooks, he wrote that "it is wrong to conceive of scientific discussion as a process at law in which there is an accused and a public prosecutor whose professional duty it is to demonstrate that the accused is guilty and has to be put out of circulation. In scientific discussion . . . the person who shows himself most "advanced" is the one who takes up the point of view that his adversary may well be expressing a need which should be incorporated, if only as a subordinate aspect, in his own construction". (p. 344) Gramsci is here referring to "scientific discussion" and naturally this idea should not be applied mechanically to every political controversy, but it implies a style of controversy which he considered should be the hall mark of a Marxist. He criticised Bukharin for attacking only the weakest thinkers on their weakest points in order to win easy verbal victories, and drew a contrast between the political and military fronts, where it is good tactics to break through at the points of least resistance first in order to invest the stronger points later on, and the ideological front where the defeat of the minor followers has an almost negligible importance and it is necessary to defeat the eminent people.

In working out his ideas, as the editors point out, (p. 45) Gramsci often used couples of opposed but dialectically united concepts, such as war of movement/war of position, force/consent, domination/leadership and state/civil society, the last three forming an essential part of his theory of hegemony. One of the difficulties in arriving at a definitive interpretation of Gramsci's thought is that he does not always use these concepts in a completely consistent manner. This is one of the consequences of the fragmentary and unfinished character of the notebooks. At the same time, it forces the reader continually to think for himself.

A characteristic feature of his concepts is that they always derive from some concrete situation in Italian society. Thus his ideas about intellectuals arose from the part they played in Italian history. But so long as we remain conscious of their setting, I believe that these ideas can have particular significance for us in view of the traditional suspicion with which the British labour movement has regarded intellectuals. It was because Gramsci insisted on the need for a continuous elaboration of Marxist theory that he devoted so much attention to the role of intellectuals in the working class movement. The working class must create its own core of intellectuals but the process is "long, difficult, full of contradictions, advances and retreats, dispersals and regroupings, in which the loyalty of the masses is often sorely tried." (p.334)

Gramsci never conceived a Marxist intellectual as one who devoted himself solely to theory. He must be actively involved in practical life as well. "There is no organisation without intellectuals, that is, without organisers and leaders . . ." Thus all members of a revolutionary vanguard ought to be considered as intellectuals, and he described the

[10] Ibid. p. 821.

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Communist Party as a "collective intellectual". He also wrote that "one should stress the importance and significance which, in the modern world, political parties have in the elaboration and diffusion of conceptions of the world, because essentially what they do is to work out the ethics and the politics corresponding to these conceptions and act as it were as their historical "laboratory' . . . one can say that the parties are . . . the crucibles where the unification of theory and practice, understood as a real historical process, takes place. It is clear from this that the parties should be formed by individual memberships and not on the pattern of the British Labour Party . . ." (p. 335).

Although he writes of political parties in the plural it is clear that he has revolutionary parties primarily in mind. It is remarkable that he should have inserted the passage about parties not being formed in the Labour Party way. Only a Communist party can perform the function of developing and testing Marxist theory and the strategy and tactics derived from it. This is the function that the Labour Party, owing to its structure—the great bulk of its members coming from the members of affiliated trade unions —simply cannot perform. From this point of view alone the Communist Party has an indispensable part to play in the British labour movement.

Gramsci's ideas about intellectuals must not be separated from the rest of his ideas on philosophy and politics and they form an integral part of his theory of hegemony. To grasp them properly it is essential to read the Notebooks themselves—and the publication of this volume of selections provides a magnificent opportunity.

Labour History

George Julian Harney in Jersey

Norman Le Brocq

The author is a stonemason. He was a Communist member of the Jersey States Assembly from December 1966 to December 1969. He will be a candidate at the next Jersey General Election in 1972.

This is by way of a postscript to the article on the Fraternal Democrats and George Julian Harney in the February, 1971, issue of *Marxism Today*.

It appears not to be widely known that after the decline of the Society of Fraternal Democrats in England, Harney settled in the island of Jersey. He may have been influenced in this choice by the fact that a number of French, Polish and Hungarian refugees of 1848/9 had settled in the island, from which they published a "magazine of universal democracy" called *L'Homme*. Ernest Jones had contributed short pieces on the work of the Fraternal Democrats to this magazine. However, while the reason for his coming to Jersey must be speculation, his editing of a local newspaper is certainly fact.

"Jersey Independent"

It was in 1855 that the *Jersey Independent—and Advocate of Progress* was born as a weekly, with Harney as editor. Later it became the first daily paper in the island.

At that time Jersey was more feudal than capitalist, and its "Parliament" the States Assembly (for the island is not part of the UK) was composed mostly of Court and Parish officials, some appointed by the Crown and some elected on a very limited franchise.

Harney soon made a name for the *Independent* by his campaigning for both political and social reforms. Its columns were used as a campaigning platform exposing and condemning the conditions of many trades, e.g. articles on the working conditions of journeyman bakers, tailors, shop assistants and so on. He penned several editorials calling for "early closing" legislation and deplored "the general public apathy and indifference to all but money-making". He was also trenchant in his attacks on the system of paying wages on Saturday nights, often as late as nine and ten p.m., and in many cases the payment being made in public houses.

The *Independent* also exposed the long delays in Court hearings, claiming that justice delayed was often injustice. Harney maintained that these delays were due to the utter incompetence, and sometimes corruptness, of the Court officials. In one searing editorial he affirmed that "The House in the Royal Square (the home of both the States Assembly and the island's Royal Court, N. Le. B.) is a proverb of ignorance, misrule and unbearable intolerance." On

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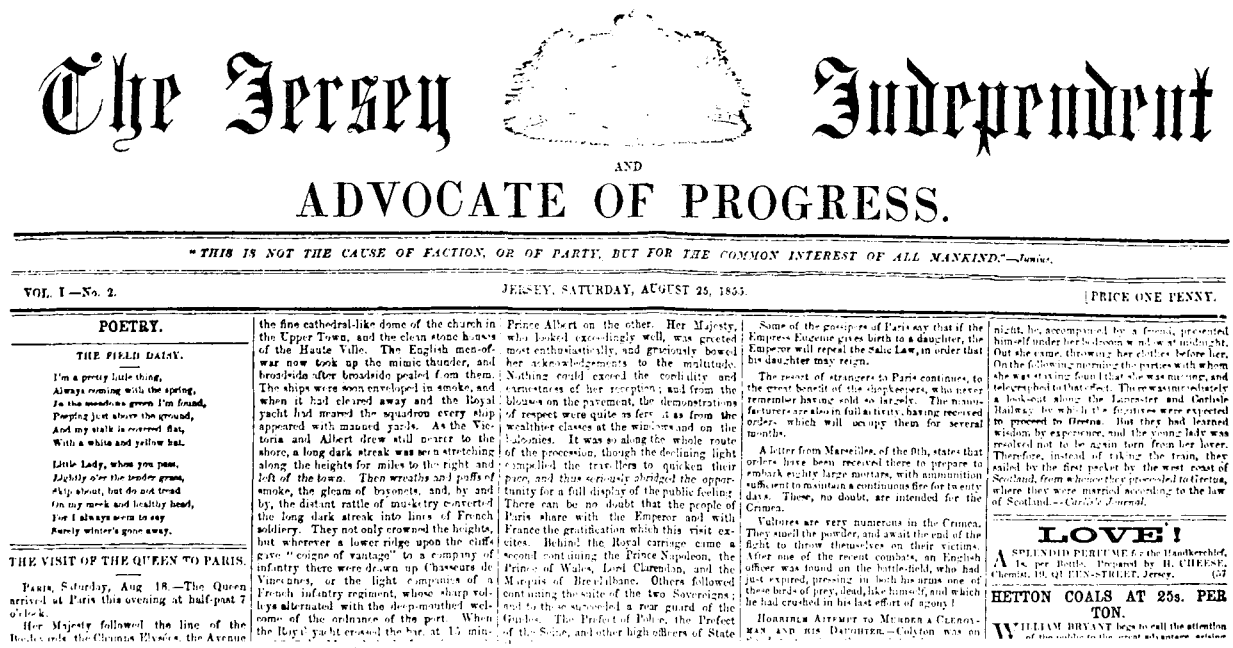

The Jersey Independent
AND
ADVOCATE OF PROGRESS.

"THIS IS NOT THE CAUSE OF FACTION, OR OF PARTY, BUT FOR THE COMMON INTEREST OF ALL MANKIND."—Junius.

VOL. I.—No. 2. JERSEY, SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1855. PRICE ONE PENNY.

POETRY.

THE FIELD DAISY.

I'm a pretty little thing,
Always coming with the spring,
In the meadows green I'm found,
Peeping just above the ground,
And my stalk is covered flat,
With a white and yellow hat.

Little Lady, when you pass,
Lightly o'er the tender grass,
Skip about, but do not tread
On my meek and healthy head,
For I always seem to say
Surely winter's gone away.

THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN TO PARIS.

Paris, Saturday, Aug. 18.—The Queen arrived at Paris this evening at half-past 7 o'clock.

Her Majesty followed the line of the Boulevards, the Champs Elysées, the Avenue the fine cathedral-like dome of the church in the Upper Town, and the clean stone houses of the Haute Ville. The English men-of-war now took up the mimic thunder, and broadside after broadside pealed from them. The ships were soon enveloped in smoke, and when it had cleared away and the Royal yacht had neared the squadron every ship appeared with manned yards. As the Victoria and Albert drew still nearer to the shore, a long dark streak was seen stretching along the heights for miles to the right and left of the town. Then wreaths and puffs of smoke, the gleam of bayonets, and, by and by, the distant rattle of musketry converted the long dark streak into lines of French soldiery. They not only crowned the heights, but wherever a lower ridge upon the cliff gave "coigne of vantage" to a company of infantry there were drawn up Chasseurs de Vincennes, or the light companies of a French infantry regiment, whose sharp volleys alternated with the deep-mouthed welcome of the ordnance of the port. When the Royal yacht crossed the bar, at 15 minutes Prince Albert on the other. Her Majesty, who looked exceedingly well, was greeted most enthusiastically, and graciously bowed her acknowledgements to the multitude. Nothing could exceed the cordiality and earnestness of her reception; and from the bloom on the pavement, the demonstrations of respect were quite as fervent as from the wealthier classes at the windows and on the balconies. It was so along the whole route of the procession, though the declining light compelled the travellers to quicken their pace, and thus seriously abridged the opportunity for a full display of the public feeling. There can be no doubt that the people of Paris share with the Emperor and with France the gratification which this visit excites. Behind the Royal carriage came a second containing the Prince Napoleon, the Prince of Wales, Lord Clarendon, and the Marquis of Breadalbane. Others followed containing the suite of the two Sovereigns; and to these succeeded a rear guard of the Guides. The Prefect of Police, the Prefect of the Seine, and other high officers of State

Some of the gossips of Paris say that if the Empress Eugenie gives birth to a daughter, the Emperor will repeal the Salic Law, in order that his daughter may reign.

The resort of strangers to Paris continues, to the great benefit of the shopkeepers, who never remember having sold so largely. The numerous furnaces are also in full activity, having received orders which will occupy them for several months.

A letter from Marseilles, of the 9th, states that orders have been received there to prepare to embark eighty large mortars, with ammunition sufficient to maintain a continuous fire for twenty days. These, no doubt, are intended for the Crimea.

Vultures are very numerous in the Crimea. They smell the powder, and await the end of the fight to throw themselves on their victims. After one of the recent combats, an English officer was found on the battle-field, who had just expired, pressing in both his arms one of these birds of prey, dead, like himself, and which he had crushed in his last effort of agony!

HORRIBLE ATTEMPT TO MURDER A CLERGYMAN, AND HIS DAUGHTER.—Colyton was on night, he, accompanied by a friend, presented himself under her bedroom window at midnight. Out she came, throwing her clothes before her. On the following morning the parties with whom she was staying found that she was missing, and telegraphed to that fact. The steamer shortly after a look-out along the Leicester and Carlisle Railway, by which the fugitives were expected to proceed to Gretna. But they had learned wisdom by experience, and the young lady was resolved not to be again torn from her lover. Therefore, instead of taking the train, they sailed by the first packet by the west coast of Scotland, from whence they proceeded to Gretna, where they were married according to the law of Scotland.—*Carlisle Journal.*

LOVE!
A SPLENDID PERFUME for the Handkerchief, 1s. per Bottle. Prepared by H. CHEESE, Chemist, 19, QUEEN-STREET, Jersey. (57

HETTON COALS AT 25s. PER TON.
WILLIAM BRYANT begs to call the attention

another occasion an editorial analysing the conduct of the Bailiff (the Crown appointed head of State and of the Royal Court) was headlined "Political Delinquency".

Harney was also one of the founders of the Jersey Reform League in September, 1856, though by 1859, he was noting in the *Independent* that he was utterly disappointed in the leadership of the Reform League which had proved incapable of rising above parish pump ideas.

The *Independent*, as one would expect from a paper edited by Harney, was also concerned with international affairs, carrying a number of attacks on the policy of Louis Bonaparte in France, and devoting a great deal of space to the Polish situation and to Garibaldi's activity.

Against Feudal Rights

But by far the most scathing (and the most entertaining) of the *Independent's* campaigns was Harney's attack on feudal rights and tithes. In the 1850's (and for long after) in Jersey the feudal seigneurs still possessed many age old rights. The enjoyment of a year's income from any property in the fief whose owner died without direct heir, and the receipt of a tithe in kind on wheat and several other crops were two that particularly excited his anger. In the first instance, Harney could quote (and did) widows left destitute as a result of losing a year's expected income. In the matter of tithes, he could show cases of attempted confiscation of crops for non-payment of tithes.

As Harney never tired of pointing out, there was no seigneural duty to go with these rights. Indeed as the buying and selling of such rights was commonplace, often quite divorced from the sale of the actual land of the fief, some of these "seigneurs", as he put it, owned not enough land in the fiefs they lorded it over, to fill a flower-pot.

In particular there were two lawyers, one Francis Godfray and a Mr. Mourant who were notorious in the buying of seigneural rights followed by a rigid enforcement of payments which had long been allowed to lapse.

In an obvious play on his name, Harney entitled Mourant, "Lord Mourant et Confisquant," and retailed in his columns with great glee episodes in which the seigneur had come off worst.

But it was the "Great Despoiler of Widows"—one of the titles that Harney bestowed on Francis Godfray—that he evidently saw as an enemy worthy of his pen. This Francis Godfray was one of the leading Jersey barristers. He appears to have been in the market for any seigneural rights that were for sale. Harney claims to have lost count of all he had bought, so usually referred to him as the "Lord of Dix-Neuf Fiefs" and compared him with Dick Turpin. One of the fiefs that Godfray bought during Harney's campaign was "Collette des Augres". This was somewhat of a legal fiction in the 1850's as it had covered an area of land which had been built up during the previous 50 years and was then an area of small shops. Godfray came up with a wonderful money spinner. He presented all the traders in the area with demands for tithes on their businesses. When there was no response, he issued them with

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official-looking summonses to the "Court of Pleas of the Fief of Collette des Augres".

The *Independent* fairly chortled when Harney discovered that the 200 or more summonses were returnable "on pain of confiscation" at a pub in one of these streets next to an open market where there was normally a Punch and Judy show in operation. Harney accused the "despoiler of widows" of unfair competition by setting up a rival show next door. He also carried an "advertisement" over two full columns of the *Independent* headed "As a result of recent confiscations . . . Francis Godfray, Draper," etc. etc. followed by: "Francis Godfray, Hardware Merchant" etc. etc. then: "Francis Godfray, Baker" and so on, to the bottom of the page where a general address was given as "Francis Godfray, Esq., Lord Collette des Augres, Seigneur des Dix-Neuf Fiefs, Wholesale Confiscator and General Merchant."

Spoilation

Not unexpectedly, particularly as the *Independent* was concurrently giving the stories of three women done out of their small inheritances by the same seigneur, Harney was the subject of a number of libel actions brought by Godfray. His defence was to use the columns of the paper in still further exposures. A rival local paper, in time honoured fashion tried to smear Harney, making dark hints about the morals of a man who was an "atheist and a Chartist". Harney laid these smears squarely at the door of Godfray in an *Independent* editorial, writing "I feel proud in having upheld the Chartist cause. But the question at issue is not "Atheism" or "Chartism", it is SPOILATION. That is the "damned spot" which like the blood mark upon the hand of Lady Macbeth indelibly attaches to your name."

I can find no trace of the several actions against Harney coming to Court, so cannot say how he fared in this matter.

He appears to have continued in such campaigning till 1862 or 1863. Unfortunately the files of the *Independent* available in the Jersey Public Library archives are incomplete, so one is faced with gaps of knowledge; but in the summer of 1863, the *Independent* was advertising the fact that it was under new management, so by then Harney must have severed his connection with it.

The National Health Service in England and Wales—A Marxist Evaluation (Part 2)

Julian Tudor Hart, MB, DCH, MRCGP

The National Health Service (NHS) in 1971 is in the same unstable awareness of impending change of unknown consequence, as the other parts of society. The old battles still go on, and old slogans pass muster: a comprehensive service, free at the time of use and financed from general taxation, increased social service expenditure by reduction of arms spending and a tax on wealth, more new hospitals and health centres, democratisation of the service, nationalisation of the drug industry—all truer than ever. But accelerating technical change and a huge expansion of informed social awareness over the past ten years have made them increasingly rhetorical, in the absence of detailed study of the new situation we are now in, socially and technically.

The undoing of what has already been achieved, the growth of private practice, the escalation of treatment charges, the softening-up of professional and public opinion for the greatest feasible return to a market distribution of medical care—all this must be resisted, and we have policies that help us to do this. But the most important element in that resistance should and could be a positive programme for a socialised health service in contemporary terms, capable of mobilising health workers and patients to fight for it. As yet, we do not have such a programme.

We are for more hospitals; but what sort? Are we for centralised specialist care in district hospitals, or do we still see an updated role for some sort of cottage hospitals? What is actually happening now? The government published no figures on outpatient waiting lists in different parts of the country, nor

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any information on exactly what it costs to bypass them through private practice. The Trades Councils have the means to find out this sort of thing, which could greatly enliven the campaign against this racket; should it not be part of our policy to initiate this sort of thing?

We are for democratisation; but how? Do we want hospital committees recruited by local direct election, indirectly through councils, with or without direct representation of local organisations such as trade unions, or what? We do have a policy on this, in very general terms[1]; but the Labour movement has so little recent experience of struggle in this sector that policy statements can only signify if they help to initiate some action; to do this they have to be translated into immediate local terms—what are we going to do about the proposed closure of a casualty department, an end to evening surgery hours in a certain practice, what sorts of decision should be taken by patients at community level, how should they regard their relation to the doctors? Are the interests of doctors and patients in conflict? At times—like doctors' pay disputes—they may seem to be so.

These are complex questions which can only be solved by fairly detailed study of the actual situation in the NHS, using whatever reliable evidence is available. The questions are being asked by increasing numbers of health workers and by many patients; a policy that answers them seriously could replace the traditionally isolated position of the Left in the health services, by an isolation of the Right.

Reaction Fights back

Ever since the initial battles of 1948, reaction has fought for a return to the market distribution of medical care: defensively at first, for medical reaction was weakened and isolated by public enthusiasm for the NHS, which even Conservative MPs were constrained to share. But as the leaders of the Labour Party retreated further and further from any recognisable class commitment, abandoned the principle of free treatment, and left the consultants to run the hospitals without any effective popular control, straightforward appeals to the greed and selfishness of the better off no longer seemed quite so discreditable, at least in opinion-forming circles.

Prophet of the new commercialism was Dr. John Seale, with proposals for a two-tiered health service, top floor for top people, even little ones, paying both the GP and the specialist through private insurance for their time and courtesy, and on the ground floor a minimum basic service excluding the

> "great deal of medical care which is of only marginal importance so far as the life or death or health of the individual is concerned . . . time, convenience, freedom of choice, and privacy . . . it is precisely these facets of medical care—the 'middle class' standards—which become more important to individuals as they become more prosperous".[2]

More important, mark you, not more accessible! Painstaking, cautious, courteous and personal medical care is much better and much safer for the patient: life or death or health often in fact depend on the presence or absence of these things—it takes courage to go to a brusque, overworked GP with a complaint of rectal bleeding, whether the cause is cancer or piles. And the doctor with time to be careful and courteous enjoys his work, can use his skills and retain his self-respect.

But, according to Dr. Seale "Some doctors are very much better than others and this will always be so . . .", so

> those who are less good can do the inferior, basic minimum work. ". . . the function of the state is, in general, to do those things which the individual cannot do and assist him to do things better. It is not to do for the individual what he can well do for himself . . . I should like to see a reform of the Health Service in the years ahead which is based on the assumption of individual responsibility for personal health, with the state's function limited to the prevention of real hardship and the encouragement of personal responsibility".

Similarly Lees in 1961[3] challenged the view that medical care could not be regarded as a marketable commodity: he claimed that the NHS violated natural economic law, and that "We would spend more on medical care than the government does on our behalf" if care were bought and sold like other goods. Many wise and prudent men would spend more on their health from savings on other optional items of personal spending, which they would not be prepared to yield in taxes for the health service as a whole. This new wealth would expand the field of private medical care, and relieve pressure on the NHS. In a situation where the hospitals were starved of staff, buildings and equipment, and a new "Labour aristocracy" of car-owning, semi-detached, social aspirants was said to be replacing the working class (as culturally defined), where the absolute uttermost limits of taxation of the rich had (so we were assured by

[1] The Administrative Structure of the National Health Service: Comments on the Second Green Paper. Communist Party, May 1970.

[2] Seale, J., British Medical Journal, 1962, **2**, 598.

[3] Lees, D. S., Health Through Choice: An Economic study of the British National Health Service. Hobart Paper No. 14, Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1961.

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everybody) already been surpassed—in this situation such ideas gained new life.

Demands for greater spending on health, and publicity for figures showing that Britain was spending a smaller proportion of its national wealth on health than a number of other countries, no longer came only from the Left, but were used as effective condiments for Labour ministers as they devoured their principles. "We should not be afraid", said Richard Crossman in a Fabian tract, "to look for alternative sources of revenue less dependent on the chancellor's whims . . . I should not rule out obtaining a higher proportion of the cost of the service from the Health Service contribution".[4] Another flat-rate tax on the people, when no further taxation of the rich can be contemplated. No battle on the principle of a free health service could be fought by men who had themselves betrayed it, who had first imposed prescription charges, built no new hospitals for ten years, and agreed to the ministerial appointment of safe establishment figures at every level of hospital administration. In fact the attitude of mind betrayed by the very phrase "welfare services" disarms whoever possesses it.

Increased Charges

For the real Left it is not difficult to discredit such policies; they are important only in so far as they go unchallenged, as, among doctors, they usually do. To an alarming extent they are already applied; a sick person commonly has three items prescribed at a time, involving a charge of £0.60—by no means a token payment. The charges in the dental service are destroying the first and valuable beginnings of conservative dentistry in industrial areas, but "Increased dental charges announced in October would give a financial incentive to patients to look after their teeth", Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary for Social Services, said. They would, therefore, have a "beneficial effect on dental health".[5] The government has not yet raised the tax on coffins to reduce mortality, but Sir Keith will be assured of a place in the history of preventive medicine. But seriously, these are not difficult policy questions; the only problems here are those of organising resistance to them.

The picture as a whole is much more complicated than this. Even in the upper reaches of NHS administration and the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) there is recognition that big changes are needed, that the present NHS structure is irrational, wasteful, and obstructs the effective delivery of care, that relatively much more money needs to be spent on primary than on hospital care. And some surprising things are happening.

Before 1966, 30 health centres were opened in England[6]: 12 were opened in 1967, 36 in 1968, and 50 in 1969, when 79 more were being built and 74 more were approved—a grand total of 280. In 1966 there were 245 general practitioners working from health centres, only one third of whom regarded them as their main places of work: in the health centres built or approved between 1967 and 1969, 1,354 doctors work, more than two thirds of whom regard them as their main places of work. The total of 1,599 GPs working from health centres is still only eight per cent of all GPs, but four-fifths of them entered health centre practice in the past four years—not a bad record.

Of course, there are now strong economic and political pressures against this trend; there is already a lot of skimping on important and rather expensive things like soundproofing, and a continued exponential rise in health centre building cannot be assumed—it will have to be fought for, and very much harder than at present. But this is not enough; if the labour movement is going to start fighting seriously for health centres, it must develop an opinion, a policy of its own, on what health centres will be for, how they will operate.

Which of the features of the old-style family doctoring do we want to retain, and how—and which do we want to make quite sure we do away with? What say are local people going to ask for in the design and running of health centres? Doctors left to themselves, even the best of them, seldom move beyond a benevolent paternal despotism. Unless progressive doctors, other health workers, patients, and popular organisations are clear about these questions, they will not be mobilised in unity to campaign for a new, more scientific but warmer, more friendly and informal health service, which I think all of us are sure we need.

Standard Surgeries

The standard GPs surgery in industrial areas was (and to a large extent still is) a converted shop, the window painted half way up, a bare waiting room with hard chairs or benches at the front, perhaps a cubby-hole for a receptionist, and a consulting room at the back. Ann Cartwright's study of 157 randomly sampled GPs in 1963[7] and of another 552 in 1964[8] showed that one third of

[4] Crossman, R. H. S., Paying For The Social Services. Fabian Society, London, 1969.

[5] The Guardian, 3rd February, 1971.

[6] Department of Health and Social Security, Annual Report for England, 1969. HMSO, 1970.

[7] Cartwright, Ann, and Marshall, Rosalind. General Practice in 1963: its Conditions, Contents, and Satisfactions. Medical Care, 1965, 3, 69.

[8] Cartwright, Ann. Patients And Their Doctors. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1967.

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them employed no ancillary staff, not even a receptionist, one third had no lavatory for patients, and nearly two thirds had no office space of any kind. A quarter of GPs at that time were single-handed, 40 per cent of these had no off-duty arrangements at night or for weekends, and 20 per cent of them had not had a holiday in the previous twelve months.

Government spending on general practice per head of population (including the largest item, prescribing costs) had remained stationary (at constant prices) from 1949 to 1966, and as a proportion of all spending on the NHS had fallen from 12.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent. Around this time a number of trends converged to create favourable conditions for a rediscovery of health centres and a serious beginning of their construction. In the United States general practice had disintegrated into minor specialism, so that about 40 per cent of people had no personal doctor to whom they knew they could go in the event of illness,[9] and from 1965 to 1970 self-referrals to hospital emergency rooms rose by 49.2 per cent, compared with a ten per cent rise in all hospital admissions; more than half of these self-referrals occurred because patients had no doctor to go to.

The beginnings of such disintegration were visible in Britain, morale in general practice was at an all-time low (it is much better now), the population was rising faster than the number of doctors, and the GP population was ageing and not being replaced. Less than a quarter of medical students were prepared to enter general practice as a first choice[10], and about 400 British doctors were emigrating permanently each year. Some of the more perceptive Establishment minds began to understand that, as an acute American observer put it,

> "Conditions of service must be changed, new premises built, more ancillary help provided. Increasing private practice would do none of these things. General practice must instead be made professionally rewarding, and the second-class status which has been attached to it by the consultant branch amended. . . . There would . . . need to be a basic change in medical education, so that students would be taught the value and true place of general practitioners in the health service. It would also be necessary to meet many of the general practitioners' demands on conditions of service. For this to be accomplished efficiently and at reasonable cost the general practitioners themselves would probably have to consent to being organised in some form of group practice".[11]

[9] Lancet, 1971, **2**, 921.

[10] Report of the Royal Commission on Medical Education 1965-68. HMSO, 1968.

[11] Jonas, S., Why Do They Emigrate? Lancet, 1965, **1**, 1,210.

For 50 years governments had willingly conceded the demand of the BMA that the doctors be left alone to provide their own premises, staff and equipment out of an increasingly ample income, to whatever standard of quality local custom would tolerate. In the industrial areas the resulting standards of building, staff, equipment, and even simple cleanliness, would never have been tolerated in any publicly-owned undertaking. In exchange for the illusion of independent self-employment, the GP took responsibility for all capital costs, and himself endured the consequences of working conditions that could be tolerable only at the cost of all real self-respect. Young doctors with respect for their own skills would not enter such a profession.

Raising Standards

The trick could not be played forever, and when the Medical Practitioners' Union and the Royal College of General Practitioners took up the task of raising and maintaining professional standards the embarrassment to the BMA, which had long ignored that function, was acute. The result was the "package deal" of 1966, which for the first time introduced substantial repayment of the cost of practice buildings and ancillary staff, and financial inducements for centralisation in group practice. At the same time the costs of building were becoming prohibitive, many old surgeries were coming under the planners' axe in urban redevelopment schemes, and opportunities for purpose-built health centres were arising on large council estates. Local authorities in industrial areas were becoming frightened at the prospect of a shortage of GPs in the 70's and 80's that was bound to affect them more than affluent areas of low morbidity in the home counties and on the South and East Anglian coasts; health centres could be a wise investment to attract new young doctors.

Well over half the final year students choosing careers in primary care preferred practice from a large group practice in a health centre; almost none would consider single-handed practice.[10] The average number of patients per GP, which fell steadily to an all-time low of 2,180 in 1961, had risen ever since: in 1966 it was estimated that merely in order to maintain the level of 1961, there would have to be 5,000 more doctors by 1975—an increase in output of 500 a year.[10] By 1969, the average number of patients per GP had risen to 2,495.[6] In these circumstances health centres appeared a perfect solution to the doctors' demands for opportunities to use their skills in a reasonable environment, which could be met economically by centralisation, and building standards which, though frugal and a long way short of the relaxed, informal and homely environment which the best primary care requires, were so far superior to the lock-up

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shop as to appear at first sight quite beyond criticism. Work could be rationalised, with devolution of much work to ancillary nursing and clerical staff, a reduction in home visiting, and a reversal of the tendency to refer more and more work to the hospitals, where every item of service was beyond comparison more expensive.

The initiative for health centres in this new wave has therefore come mainly from sections of the doctors themselves, particularly the MPU and the RCGP, and the University Departments of Social Medicine, with some support from their medical schools who are interested in health centre populations for teaching and research, from the higher reaches of the permanent civil servants of the DHSS (to a great extent independently of the two alternating ruling parties), and from the local authorities and their public health departments: the interests of these groups are represented in present conceptions of the character, size, and style of work of health centres. The Labour Party seems to have accepted this along with many other centralising and technicalising tendencies (good and bad) as being both inevitable and necessarily progressive, part of the spontaneous transformation of capitalism into socialism. Neither Communist Party branches nor the Party nationally appear to have been very active in this sector, nor have the Trade Unions either nationally or locally, except for the MPU. Individual academics, medical and sociological, have had their brains picked, and have influenced plans to some extent. The Consumers' Association has not so far looked at any of the measures of rationalisation, centralisation, and delegation of work, from the point of view of the patient.

Arbitrary Figures

Effective power, the power of important decision, lies almost wholly with people who do not use the NHS through its normal channels, and are treated either privately or as VIPs, who have cars for visiting, and the fact that they have the knowledge and power to make effective criticism of their care written all over their faces. Even the most Christian efforts at imagining the plight of others is no substitute for the real criticism of plain folk, and such efforts are in any case seldom made. For this reason most of all, we must view with caution if not alarm the successive proposals for optimum size of health centres over the past 20 years: populations of 10-20,000 with four to eight GPs in 1950[12], 25,000 with six to eight GPs in 1951[13], 30,000 with ten or 12 GPs in 1968[10], and 20-50,000 with five to 13 GPs in 1969[14].

The figure 50,000 represents the minimum population size for provision of consultant clinics in the health centre itself (instead of the hospital outpatient department), and perhaps of units of social workers as envisaged in the Seebohm report. All the other figures appear arbitrary; no one recently has revived the idea of GPs themselves becoming specialists (or specialoids, as John Fry aptly christened them), nor has anyone suggested that more than five or six doctors need to work together to end the professional isolation of the single-handed GP. Indeed, if *all* members of the group are to know one another and share in discussion of their work, serious difficulties begin as one exceeds this sort of number. For the most part there is just an assumption, unsupported by evidence, that bigger means better—in particular, more economic. Since efficiency in the NHS depends to a large extent on motivation and morale, these assumptions are probably false.

There are several dangers associated with the development of very large units of this sort, in the absence of effective consumer representation. The most serious, and the only one much discussed by doctors, is the threat to the personal and continuous nature of primary care, which is the central feature of general practice at its best. Of course, not all of general practice *is* at its best, particularly in industrial areas. The view that impersonal care will do well enough for most patients was well put by a doctor at a College of Practitioners' meeting in 1969:

> With regard to the personal doctor, a point stressed time and time again, he wondered how many patients really wanted this particular aspect. 'We treasure this very much indeed . . . and get great satisfaction out of it, but, in all honesty, probably only 20 per cent of the patients make this an important issue. I agree that we should make it available to those people but it is not so important for the other 80 per cent".[16]

Certainly there is now wide experience of group practices which do in fact use appointment systems and ancillary staffs to erect barriers between doctors and patients, evidently in an effort to reduce their pressure of work, with inevitable and disastrous effect on personal relations with patients. Many

[12] Report of the Central Health Services Council for 1950, part 11 On Health Centres.

[13] British Medical Association Committee Report on Health Centres, 1951. British Medical Journal Supplement, 8.9.51 and 15.9.51.

[14] Fry, J., Medicine in Three Societies. MTP, Aylesbury, 1969.

[15] Symposium on a Future in General Practice. Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners, 1970, **20**, supplement No. 1.

[16] A Symposium on Group Practice. Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners, 1970, **20**, supplement No. 2.

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patients, and many observing doctors, have learnt that this sort of 'progress' has nothing in common with good practice, past, present or future. However, there is evidence of real continuity, and of a genuinely personal character, in much primary care in Britain as it now is. Cartwright[8] found that two-thirds of adults had had the same doctor for at least five years, two-thirds thought their doctor would know them by name if he met them in the street, and 44 per cent described their relationship with their doctor as friendly rather than businesslike.

Small Groups

It seems to me that we should accept gladly a perspective of small groups of up to six doctors which could remain on a neighbourhood scale, in which the doctors could come to know the local working, domestic, recreational and educational environment, and develop personal ties with the other kinds of social worker, especially teachers and probation officers. Groups of this size could make optimal use of expensive equipment and skilled full time ancillary help for the devolution of work which still wastes a lot of the doctor's time even in existing groups.

A study by the Association of Medical Secretaries[16] and the Royal College of General Practitioners showed that of 140 practices known to have some ancillary staff system, less than half had typing skill available, and in all practices less than ten per cent of the staff had any training for the jobs they were doing. Twelve per cent had some secretarial skills and five per cent had some knowledge of book-keeping.

Another study by the Association of Medical Secretaries[17] showed that in 1967, of 108 secretaries and other lay assistants, 80 received pay of 7/- an hour or less (4d. an hour more than a home help) though all were doing responsible work, always more than simple reception duties. In almost every case more hours were being worked than the agreed number, without extra pay. Clearly, if proper training and civilised rates of pay were the rule rather than the exception (and this will come when ancillary staff cease to be employed by the doctors, and become salaried workers employed by the DHSS) there could be enormous benefits from a real development of teamwork in medical care. For the most part, groups of this size need not reduce the accessibility of primary care to patients. Except in the special situation of rural and mining village areas, sensibly sited centres could remain within pram-pushing distance of all the families they serve.

[17] Linton, E. E. M., in Symposium on the Management of Staff in General Practice. Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners, 1970, **19**, supplement No. 3.

What are the advantages to patients or doctors in very large centres serving 20-50,000 people? Certainly outpatient referrals are now grossly excessive and often inefficient: hospital specialists seldom in fact act as consultants—that is, they have either lost or never acquired the skill of sharing the care of a patient with his own doctor. The GPs of the future, with much better training in their speciality could certainly do much of the present outpatient work of consultant physicians, if they worked in a critical environment and had ready access to good diagnostic X-ray and laboratory facilities. There is a good case for Community Care Units that would devolute many of the simpler kinds of hospital in- and particularly out-patient care as proposed by Peter Draper[18], and in densely populated cities these need not be more than a mile from any patient. But before giving support to such proposals we must look at the political and social forces bearing upon them, which will ultimately determine their real content.

Growing Demand

The demand from GPs themselves, particularly from the College of Practitioners and from young doctors and medical students, for an intimate, neighbourhood style of practice is strong and growing: it is at least a proxy for the defence of the interests of patients. It is weakened by confusion caused by opposition to health centres from advocates of private practice of the traditional stone age type, and support for super health centres by space age managerial types: some medical Lefts seem a bit lost between these two. Effective pressure from patients, from the Trade Unions and from local organisations is almost absent, a dangerous situation that must be remedied. Against these are the Treasury, who are interested only in maximising cost-benefit (and know a good deal more about costs than benefits), and the growing number of doctors, including some influential GPs who agree with John Ellis,[19] Dean of the London Hospital Medical School, when he says,

> "I think we have to face it in Britain that the general practitioner as we know him and have known him, is a luxury that we are not affluent enough to afford in the future, at any rate, not for a very long time, and his role as a comforter will fall to the medical social worker. His role in initial diagnosis and rule-of-thumb therapy will fall, and is beginning to fall, to the nurse. His role of emergency doctor has already fallen to the hospital emergency services".

[18] Draper, P., Community Care Units and Inpatient Units as Alternatives to the District General Hospital. Lancet, 1967, **2**, 1,406.

[19] Ellis, J., Reform of Medical Education. National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC, 1970.

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The suggestion that the primary care doctor should not himself do all the caring is not necessarily a bad one. Kuenssberg[20] in a seven-doctor partnership with two nurses shifted 616 out of 5,200 first contacts from doctor to nurse, that is, the receptionist sorted them (often at their own request) to the nurse rather than the doctor—mostly for cuts and bruises in youngsters, minor skin ailments, boils and rashes such as chickenpox and similar obvious minor complaints without other physical or emotional complications. They also shifted 319 follow-up contacts in the month of observation, a reduction of about 1,000 doctor-patient contacts altogether. The nurse was also able to perform a listening function, supplementary to that of the doctors. She said of this: "Well, you see, all the patients think that the doctor is so busy but that I, the surgery nurse, have lots of time, so they talk to me, and very often in these chats lies the clue to a problem which the doctor has been seeking". These 657 listening episodes actually exceeded the first-contact cases in the month under study.

List Sizes

But it is one thing for the GP to share his work with a team in order to concentrate more effectively on those aspects of it where his skills are most useful, while retaining sufficient contact with patients to know all of them, but quite another to withdraw from a true primary role—as is implied, I think, in Ellis's statement. The temptation to do this lies partly in coping with much bigger lists (with bigger incomes; a point I have never seen mentioned in print). List sizes of 3,000 to 5,000 in industrial areas are now being seriously discussed, not as a necessary retreat in a time of staff shortage, but as a clinically more satisfying role for the doctor, because he will see more substantial illness. [20] [21]

The patient's perception of the actual or potential significance of his symptoms is different from the doctor's perception, and this difference is greatest where the social class (culture) of the patient differs from that of the doctor, as is nearly always the case in industrial general practice. In such areas other non-clinical problems, such as fitness for work, assessment of housing priority, problems of school attendance, and so on, form a much higher proportion of the doctor's work. While much of this work could and should be delegated by the doctor, sometimes to the point of delegation without patient contact, the doctor has had a traditional role as a powerful, informal bureaucrat, generally committed to his patient's interest, which has been valuable in the past and could be more important in the future.

The case for shifting all of this work to other social workers has not been made, to my satisfaction at least; and if it is, I am quite sure the case will not rest on economic grounds, for such work will require a great deal of training and experience. It is sometimes forgotten that the presence of the doctor at times of birth, death, and extreme grief and suffering, can give him an insight into the people he knows, and an emotional access to them, which is difficult to acquire for people whose work does not give them such experience. Non-clinical contacts with patients, which so many doctors wish to avoid, may be of special value to the doctor himself, in giving him a fuller view of his patients, and particularly of their work and their attitude to it.

The hospital specialist works at the end of a complex series of sorting procedures, beginning with the GP who deals with 98 per cent of doctor-patient contacts and refers two per cent to hospital; then the housemen and registrars, doctors in training who deal with many patients without referring them to the consultant; and finally to the king himself. Consultants notice the real value of the GP when this sorting process breaks down, and they meet a patient full of complaints but with fragmentary and contradictory physical signs and laboratory tests, with an inarticulate history, and an emotional, domestic, and working life that is the more bizarre and perplexing the deeper one digs into it. Their reaction is frequently one of extreme vexation that this non-clinical rubbish has penetrated into their sterile and castrated environment—a man without a clinical disease has got in.

In general practice the patient remains stubbornly attached to his disease, or non-disease; there he is as a person, unavoidable, no longer awed and submissive, and often not alone but with wife and all those "belonging to" him, breathing down your neck. Doctors work in what is potentially a dreadfully exposed position, taking continual decisions about things that are very precious, heavily laden with emotion for the patient, yet to the doctor they are every day, every hour matters, which nevertheless must not be dealt with in an off-hand, routine manner. In hospitals they are armoured, they can retreat behind science, dignity, rudeness, authority, confident that they do not live with the patient and will not see him again, or his relatives. The young GP quickly discovers that such armour can no longer be used in primary care, and his position can be tolerable only by working very hard and very cautiously to build relations of affection and real respect between himself and his patients and their families.

[20] Fry, J. J., Too Few Doctors—or Too Many? Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners, 1969, **17**, 335.

[21] Clarke, M., Changes in List Size and the Effect on the General Practitioner's Workload. Update Plus, May 1971, 337.

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The New Attitude

The most hopeful thing in medicine today is the rapid growth of this attitude, particularly among young doctors, an important minority of whom are tending to look toward primary care as a career precisely because of this feature of it, and who reject the attitude to patients that still dominates most hospital consultants, the attitude of disease-orientation. It is a special case of the general problem of alienation between human beings, that central feature of capitalist society first analysed by Marx. If we can put forward convincing solutions to it, if we can work out the social and organisational forms of primary care that help to destroy the pandemic of alienation instead of accelerating it, we can win the decisive sections of doctors for socialism, not as a remote objective, but as a revolutionary change to be made by us in our lifetime.

Many other issues are of very great importance in elaborating a serious policy for the health services, a contemporary Marxist position. In this paper I have dealt with one of them in depth, rather than skipping quickly through them all, because I think this question is of most immediate and central importance, and can most easily be translated into local activity. A real Marxist policy depends on experience of action. But the other main issues also need examination and discussion in depth. Nationalisation of the drug industry: what could this mean, in removing the huge and growing distortions of medical care generated by this most powerful lobby, with huge and internationalised concentrations of wealth and influence? Democratisation of health services, both hospitals and local primary care services; very much more needs to be done to bring together the mainly unreported experience of efforts in this field, as well as big movements like that in the Rhondda against the closure of the Llwynypia casualty department. Both successes and failures here need serious evaluation, new initiatives need to be taken, and the great opportunities for united action here with good Labour people need to be seized generously.

The whole question of the relation of the social services and those who work in them, to the rest of society, and to our revolution, needs re-examination in modern terms. Traditionally, in both health and education services, and in local authority welfare services, the Left has been isolated by a reactionary consensus, an immensely powerful ideology of snobbery and freezing charity, and among doctors, of simple greed. The ground under this structure is washed away; hospital matrons no longer suffer from ingrowing virginity, private practice is viewed by many if not most young doctors as a disreputable vice, nurses and laboratory technicians want to be paid in money instead of pats on the head. The time is coming for a Left consensus in the social services, with isolation of the Right, a permanent shift of a huge section of valuable people from the camp of reaction to the camp of revolution. Of course, it has to be worked for. Of course, professional workers, even the Lefts, are for the most part almost completely ignorant of the simplest truths of the shop-floor; yet do they not have a unique experience of working in the only industries we have that exist to produce something of social value *because* it has social value, not because it makes profit for a boss?

In our revolution we are going to need everybody that is not a capitalist, in the Marxist sense of a man who lives by owning things, not by contributing a skill to society.

Marx Memorial Library Programme

Lectures—7.30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 10th—Rosa Luxemburg: Her Life and Ideas
E. WANGERMANN

Friday, Jan. 21st—Rebellion to Revolution —Socialist Road for British Youth
GORDON MCLENNAN

Friday, Feb. 4th—Geo. Lukacs: The Man, His Ideas and Work
Prof. ISTVAN MEZAROS

Admission free

Questions and Discussion

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Discussion Contributions on:

The Crisis of Man and Environment—The Crisis to End all Crises ?

J. R. Horth

Introduction

The paper by Richard Hayter and John Cox,[1] prepared at the request of the Executive Committee specifically to deal with the "wider theoretical questions of the current discussion", is to be welcomed. In particular, it should serve to undo the harm done to the standing of Party theory by the superficial article by John Moss,[2] which appeared earlier this year.

The relationships between Mankind, (not just some men), resources, (not just some resources), and the environment, (not just some small part of it), have been set out in such a way as to compel us to abandon any pre-conceived ideas which we may have either inherited or acquired. We must now think about the subject in a serious and objective way. (So recent is the awareness that all components of nature are interwoven, that the very word "Ecology" was only introduced into the scientific language about 100 years ago.)

Before long, all parts of the globe will have been occupied or exploited by Man, and the supply of natural resources will have become critical. Careful husbandry, rather than the exploitation of natural resources will become the key to human survival. Continued population growth, topographical limitations of the Earth itself, the exhaustion of natural resources will all inevitably require that its economy be based on strict ecological principles. *This imperative necessity is not yet widely recognised.* Until now, Man has lived as if the areas available to him were unlimited; as if there were infinite resources of air, soil, water, and other resources. He could do this with relative impunity because in the past, *there was always some other place where he could go*, start a new life, and engage in any sort of adventure that he chose.

Generalisations

A number of generalisations can serve as a theoretical basis for discussing the effects of the environment on human life. These are worth quoting in full[3]:—

> "1. To live is to respond to stimuli. Hence, the environment is best conducive to human development when it is sufficiently changeable to provide constant challenges, provided that these are not so severe as to become incompatible with successful responses from the body and the mind."
>
> "2. Whether the challenge comes from physical or social forces, the diversity of the environment is of critical importance. Each person has a wide range of mental potentialities, but these can only be actualised to the extent that conditions are favourable for their development. Furthermore, since persons differ in their tastes and aspirations, and therefore have differing needs, it is impossible to define one type of environment equally favourable for all of them."
>
> "3. It is impossible to define an environment optimum for Man, if one only has Man in mind. Ecologically, Man is part of the total environment and therefore cannot achieve and maintain physical and mental health if conditions are not suitable for environmental health. As used here, the phrase 'environmental health' refers to the state of the physical and biological system in which Man lives. It implies not only survival of the system but his ability to evolve in a desirable direction, so that Man too can also evolve. Becoming is at least as important as being."

It is often assumed that progress depends upon Man's ability to *conquer* Nature, but in reality there exists in Man deep biological and emotional needs that require, not the conquest of Nature, but rather the harmonious collaboration with its forces. The ultimate goal should be to so manage the environment that it contributes to the physical and mental health of Man, and to the flowering of civilisation. Conservation implies a balance between the multiple components of Nature, including Man, but this is a doctrine difficult to reconcile with present-day trends *that see Man as recognising no limits to his power.*

[1] R. Hayter and J. Cox. *Marxism Today*. Sept. 1971.

[2] J. Moss. *Labour Monthly*. March 1971.

[3] R. Dubos. UNESCO Papers on "Use and Conservation of the Biosphere" (1968), 1970.

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A General Alert

A message, signed by 2,200 scientists from 23 countries, addressed to their "three and a half billion neighbours on this planet Earth", warning of the "unprecedented common danger" facing Mankind, was handed to United Nations General-Secretary U Thant in New York, on May 11, 1971. To the delegation of six who presented the message, U Thant declared:—

> "I believe that mankind is at last becoming aware of the fact that there is a delicate equilibrium of physical and biological phenomena on and around the Earth which cannot be thoughtlessly disturbed as we race along the road of technological development... This global concern in the face of a grave common danger, which carries with it the seeds of extinction for the human species, may well prove to be the elusive force which can bind men together. The battle for human survival can only be won by all nations joining together in a concerted drive to preserve life on this planet."

The message[4] says, among other things:—

> "We really do not know the full dimensions of either our problems or their solutions. We do know that the Earth and all its inhabitants are in trouble, and that our problems will multiply if we do not attend to them."

Among the *immediate* things which it says should be done are:—

> (a) a moratorium on technological innovations, *the effects of which we cannot tell, and which are not essential to human survival;* (my italics—JRH) Examples quoted include:
> new weapons systems; luxury transport; new and untested pesticides; new plastics;
> (b) the application of existing pollution-control technology to the generation of energy and to industry generally; and the large-scale re-cycling of materials in order to slow down the exhaustion of resources;
> (c) intensified programmes in all regions of the world to curb population growth;

and it concludes:—

> "Earth, which has seemed so large, must now be seen in its smallness. We live in a closed system, absolutely dependent upon Earth and on each other for our lives and for those of succeeding generations. *The many things that divide us, are, therefore, infinitely less important than the interdependence and danger that unite us.* (my italics—JRH) We believe that it is literally true that only by transcending our divisions will men be able to keep Earth as their home. Solutions to the actual problems of pollution and war *may be simpler to find than the formula for the common effort through which the search for solutions must occur, but we must make a beginning.*" (My italics—JRH)

[4] UNESCO Courier, July 1971.

Present Attitudes

At present, we are avoiding these challenges. The idea that this century will mark a unique end-point is so terrifying that we tend to avoid thinking about it. It is argued that Man has always survived his past disasters, and that therefore he will do so again. We forget how many previous civilisations have crashed through what can now be identified as environmental mismanagement.

We tend to assume that "something will turn up" in the shape of new discoveries, new inventions, new panaceas. It has not yet been widely grasped that the real issues are different. They are world-wide, not local and domestic; they demand vision somewhat more critical and lengthy than the date of our entry into the Common Market; a vision more penetrating than a grasp of the iniquities of the Industrial Relations Act; and a vision more truly comprehensive than the declared aim of the Socialist Sixth of the Earth to catch up with and surpass the material output of the USA.

Man's conquest of Nature has come to mean that we have diminished the possibilities of small inconveniences at the cost of increasing the probability of very large disasters. There are many examples—from the extinction of species for the sake of fashion, to the risk of mass lead poisoning for the sake of marginally cheaper motoring.

Time: The Greatest Danger

Marxism is essentially a doctrine of optimism. It states that there are no things which are "unknowable", but only that there are things at present unknown in the given state of knowledge. It likewise states that there are no problems which are insoluble, but only that there are problems insoluble by virtue of the present state of knowledge, and the present level of social organisation. In other words, Man can solve any problem given (a) *the social will* to do so; (b) *the necessary knowledge* to do so; (c) *the necessary funds* from society to do it; but it makes no mention of the fourth essential—(d) *the necessary time* in which to accomplish the task.

It is my opinion that time is the parameter which is crucial for this issue. The problems facing us are two-fold, and they interact: (a) the sheer weight of numbers, and (b) the destructive potential of modern technology.

Technology has made the numbers possible; numbers make the technology dangerous. The only apparent solutions at this point in time are either to limit the numbers, or to limit the technology. Maybe we will have to do both. Up to now it has been assumed that the view that the good life lies in an ever-increasing abundance of material goods will triumph; suddenly it begins to appear that it may well lead to disaster. The choice becomes whether to make an *intelligent use* of the gifts of technology, and

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to use these to enrich a humane existence, or whether, like the lemmings to rush headlong to uncontrollable doom.

Modern technology—the supreme achievement of the western world—has now come close to destroying *the immediate physical environment* of the fully industrialised countries; and the continuing existence of imperialist exploitation is now threatening to do the same to the other areas of the world. At the same time, the impact of this technology on the under-developed countries, still *relatively* free from its destructive results, has compelled the rulers of these areas to opt for copying "the West" in the concept of the ever-increasing growth of the gross national product, as the means of most rapidly raising the living standards of their own peoples.

If the growth of technology is retarded in these areas, the raising of the living standards will be retarded as well. How are we to cope with this aspect of the problem? The simple posing of this question is sufficient to make us grasp the awe-inspiring nature of the decisions which have to be taken. No political party—and that includes the Communist Party—has given any thought to this. The Communist Party's approach may well be critical, not only to its own political credibility, but—even more important—to problems of world survival.

Hayter and Cox clearly demonstrate that time is of the essence. Estimates vary as to the time left to us to solve these problems. No authority seems to give us more than 50 years—many give us much less. It is worth considering further this brief span of years—a maximum of two generations.

The UN will be holding an international conference on these matters in Stockholm in 1972, and there can be no doubt but that precise, intelligible, and acceptable proposals for concerted international action on many levels will be put forward for action. Indeed, the preparatory steps for such a conference can be considered as having been taken by the UNESCO Conference on the "Rational Use and Conservation of the Biosphere" held in Paris in 1968. The Final Report of this Conference made a number of recommendations. These are too lengthy to be included here, but an abstract of the "General Conclusions" of the meeting is worthy of study:—

> "The historic independent and unco-ordinated use of resources must be replaced by well planned, integrated, and multi-disciplinary activities".
>
> "In the place of single-purpose actions in disregard of their associated consequences, both public and private, there is need to substitute planned programmes for the management of resources, if past degradation of the environment and deterioration of eco-systems are to be corrected; if the biosphere's productivity is to be maintained and even enhanced; and if aesthetic appreciation is given opportunity to flower. *The approach to these goals has an essential political ingredient, but it is clear that solutions are possible under several economic, political and social systems.*" (My italics—JRH)
>
> "Until this point in history, the nations of the world have lacked comprehensive and considered policies for the management of the environment. It is now abundantly clear that national policies are mandatory if environmental quality is to be restored and improved."
>
> "It has become clear that *earnest and bold departures from past thinking* (My italics—JRH) will have to be taken nationally and internationally if significant progress is to be made. No man, no people, can travel this road alone. *This recognition of the necessity for co-operative action* (My italics—JRH) is an unprecedented challenge to Man's wisdom and to his good-will."

Party Attitudes

To date, there has been little or no discussion in Party periodicals. The South Essex District Congress of November 1970 passed a resolution on this subject, and, following this, there have been discussions at several local Branches. For the sake of the record, here is the text of this Resolution:

> "That this District Congress expresses its alarm at the rapid deterioration of the natural environment and the unrestricted depletion of natural resources brought about by the explosive growth of technology without any corresponding growth in democratic control, and urges the whole Party to devote special attention to bring the following matters to public notice:—
>
> (1) the protection of the environment is expensive in terms of money, complicated in terms of conflicting interests, world-wide in importance, (pollution does not recognise State frontiers), and crucial to the survival of mankind;
>
> (2) the scientific measures known to be necessary to overcome modern industrial pollution must be codified by legislation, and this legislation must be strictly enforced;
>
> (3) the full cost of these measures must be considered as a prime charge on industry, and such costs must not be allowed to be built into the selling price of the products manufactured at a particular factory;
>
> Party Branches in South Essex should aim to support, and help to originate, campaigns for specific improvement of the environment in their locality where possible, and so win people for socialist ownership and majority control of planning"

It is fairly evident that this Resolution, although, so to speak, breaking the ice on this subject, is nowhere near sufficiently comprehensive. We must grasp the need for "*earnest and bold departures from past thinking*". The projected UN Conference in Stockholm due to be held next year will lay down general guide lines but the Communist Parties of the world need to think about what they can contribute to the generation of world-wide awareness of the problems involved.

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Suggested Action

Our own Party has submitted evidence to the sitting Royal Commission on the Environment. This is a very good document, but, in essence, it is directed to the particular circumstances of the UK. What is now needed is something wider.

Firstly, I suggest that we should generate through UNESCO, the idea of creating a UN "Council for the Preservation of Mankind and the Environment" (or some similar title); such a body having functions in relation to the environment, analgous to those of the existing UN Security Council in matters relating to the preservation of peace. Such a body could organise practical work and allocate funds to the many research programmes which will be needed, *and which, in any case must before long be set up if* Man is to survive.

Secondly, I suggest that the British Communist Party should take the initiative and call an International Conference of World Communist Parties—to be held preferably in London—for the purpose of obtaining agreement on the desirable lines of action in relation to the general problem. Such a Conference should spell out, (in terms that the bulk of the population can readily grasp), exactly what is the threat to Mankind; the sort of action necessary to avert this threat; and, equally important, the economic consequences of taking action along these lines (specifically, the imperative necessity of diverting money away from armaments, and into the environment).

Such a Conference could serve to regain the political initiative for our Party, at a time when more and more of the British people are falling prey to cynicism, passivity, and worse. Such a conference could rally people to us precisely because it poses to them the real problems as distinct from the many false issues now offered them by existing politicians and existing political systems.

But, to be effective, such an initiative must spell out in the clearest possible terms the basic fact of the shortness of time available to avert disaster. 30 to 50 years at most. Hence our appeal must be directed primarily to the young.

The young are the most radical force in world society today; they may be unorganised, but they are challenging the existing social order, because they have come to understand that it means war; that it means poverty; that it means exploitation; and now, and above all else, that it means the destruction of the environment. *This is what is new in the 1970s. This is the next "dialectical leap" from quantity to quality.*

Technology is in danger of controlling Man, instead of the other way round. Science, for long regarded as being the salvation of mankind is now seeming to emerge as its destroyer—brought about by the universal clamour of both rich and poor countries alike, for the continuous growth of the "Gross National Product". It is immaterial whether this is being done under capitalism in pursuit of rent, interest, and profit, or under socialism for the "satisfaction of the needs of the masses". The end result is likely to be the same unless the most powerful, united, and world-wide steps are taken to stop it.

This is a noble task—worthy of the Parties which claim to be the vanguard of the working class. The problem calls for inspired leadership. Let our Party give it.

Why did it Happen?—A Rejoinder

Maurice Dobb

In order that the discussion on "Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain" may be continued without any further delay we are concluding the discussion on "Why Did it Happen?" and on "Socialist Democracy" (which will be summed up by James Klugmann in the near future) in this issue. We apologise to the readers whose contributions on these questions we have been unable to publish. Editor.

May I say, looking back on it, that this discussion has proved to be extensive enough to have been well worth while (although it would, perhaps, need to be considerably more extensive to banish entirely that impression of "reluctance to discuss" of which Bill Carritt spoke)? A brief reply will, I'm afraid, do less than justice to it as a whole as well as to individual contributors. With most of what has been said I tend to agree, and my comments accordingly are few. But, in making these, I should like to express the hope that this will not really be the end of the matter —rather, the beginning of more extensive collective

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discussion of these questions. (One wonders how many *branch* discussions have centred around them to date.)

May I revert to this question of "inevitable", raised by F. Gee? It is true that I used the words "historical necessity": perhaps I should not have done so, even though I put them between inverted commas. But this was used to refer to the abrogation of democratic practices in circumstances of civil war foreign intervention, and not to its continuance (or rather revival and reinforcement) subsequently, still less to the extremer excesses of the so-called "Stalin period" with its Yezhov- or Beria-type police regime. The prime intention of what I wrote (MTD, Dec. 1969) was to *explain* (in a causal sense) what happened in terms of the historical situations of time and place. To explain is not to excuse; but what it can do is to throw light upon the probability of its happening again in other circumstances (which may be quite different—or alternatively may be analogous in some relevant respects). What is evidently worrying people widely on the Left is: if this has happened once to the "dictatorship of the proletariat", is it not likely to happen again? (As N. C. Brooks writes: "Is this bound to happen after every socialist revolution? If not then we must explain why not.") And this gnawing question at the back of the minds of all but those whom I'd call "ostriches" is much *more* "demoralising" (I would submit) than full and frank discussion of how we can prevent its happening again, in the light of understanding what caused it. (And to suggest that we must not do this because the C.I.A. may be listening strikes me as the depth of political idiocy!)

Our Different Conditions

The difference of conditions in our own (and more generally the West and North-West European) case gives substantial grounds for hope, and for confident and honest assertion that we intend to follow a democratic road. Whether, as Walter Greaves seems to imply in his closing paragraph, the difference is so great as to mean "it cannot happen here", I don't feel so sure. "Can't happen-here" attitudes may breed too much complacency. But if we mean what we say by "The British Road" *and* see to it that we mean it, there is certainly good ground for hope and confidence which one trusts will not be allowed to remain mere "pious words and hopes" and "wishful thinking".

There remains the question raised by Fred Lindop as to when the crucial deviation from Leninism began. Agreed that there were already danger-signs in the "20's, the appearance of which certainly exercised Lenin in the months before he died. (And here I could fully endorse Jack Lindsay's recommendation to read the evidence of this revealed in Moshe Lewin's *Lenin's Last Struggle*). Nonetheless I would date the crucial turning point, and the start of dangerous distortions, later than this: first of all in Stalin's turning of "mass collectivisation in the winter of 1929-30 into a virtual police operation (he himself spoke of it as a "revolution from above" on the peasant front); and secondly, his treatment of the minority (or was it majority?) of the Party Congress of 1934 (again as a police action), touched on by Bill Carritt. During the 20's, despite some organisational tightening and "arbitrariness", there was still free and open discussion within the Party and publicly in the Press (e.g. in *Pravda*), where were published the statements and "platforms" of opposition groups. I cannot help thinking that Fred Lindop's reference to "the tremendous debates . . . in which the left opposition put forward comprehensive alternative policies and pointed to the danger of the course being pursued", is something of a red herring in the present context. These debates were primarily about economic policy—policy towards the peasantry and ways and means of industrialisation—and not about questions of democracy within the Party or the Soviets; and it is doubtful whether, if the "Left" had won, they would have been any less centralising and authoritarian. (Trotsky, though probably less coldly ruthless than Stalin, had a distinctly authoritarian streak and in the trade union discussion of 1920 had adopted a distinctly bureaucratic standpoint; while in 1929-30 Preobrazhensky and others of his lieutenants rallied to Stalin's anti-*kulak* drive as a welcome turn to the Left.) Of course, one must not underestimate the possible effect of different personalities (e.g. if Lenin's advice about the post of General Secretary had been followed)—just as we should not exaggerate it. But it was assuredly the *methods* of carrying out policy in the '30's that constituted the distortion, and not the policy-ends themselves. However one may explain it, the historical tragedy was that, on the contrary to being ephemeral, these methods were to harden into a system. I certainly would not want to speak of *this* as unavoidable and "historically necessary", even in the special and cruel circumstances of a backward country striving to build socialism, alone and "against the clock" amid a hostile capitalist world.

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Socialist Democracy

Jerry Spring

There can be no doubt that we should have initiated a Left dialogue around questions of socialist democracy and that we should be in the forefront of such discussion. But, I fear, we are hardly likely to initiate let alone lead such a discussion until we, at least, refute the partial analysis, recently re-affirmed, of the "personality cult". We continue to be held in suspicion by many who are seeking a socialist alternative to capitalism that does not involve authoritarian regimes. And others of the left who advocate a revolutionary road to socialism accuse us of lacking both revolutionary spirit and a democratic perspective.

That there is a marked reluctance to discuss these issues, is prompted less by the fact that they are fundamental and complex than by the acceptance that the party has established its theoretical position on the question of socialist democracy and this has had the effect of inhibiting discussion except for that evolving around analysis and criticism of deformations in the socialist countries.

Containment of Authoritarianism

There is a need to examine authoritarianism in the pre-revolutionary period and its further development in a period of socialist transition.

The party's present theoretical standpoint concerning socialist democratic principles centres around two closely interrelated factors.

Firstly: A resistance to change expressed in the refusal to revise the *form* of democratic centralism.

Secondly: The concept of freedom for all trends under socialism.

In this theoretical standpoint, the containment of authoritarianism in socialist society is seen primarily in the form of checks and safeguards *exterior* to the party, exterior in the sense that other parties and groupings will prevent anthoritarian developments within the party from infiltrating the decisive organs of the state apparatus. If we accept that the present form of democratic centralism is to remain essentially the same and if the tendency towards authoritarianism is encouraged by that form we are left with no alternative but to declare that the party will not seek exclusivity in the control of state power. The rejection of exclusivity becomes necessary in order to convince people of our democratic intent and of our concern that deformations will not occur here.

But many socialists continue to remain unconvinced, in-as-much as they are aware that the role of communist parties in the establishment of socialism has been one of taking an exclusive, leading position with decisive control over the state apparatus and they see that it is possible for this process to happen here, in spite of assurances being given to the contrary. In a future situation, the party may be forced to re-assert the "leading role" approach as still being the only viable one for the advance of revolutionary struggle, even in Britain. The intended checks, exterior to the party, can then be considered no longer. To understand this is to understand that the "freedom for all trends" theory is really a non-starter.

Democratic Centralism

Socialist democracy, of course, cannot be discussed as something separate from the strategy of the Party and it is in that recognition that we must seek the alternative. We must surely start with a political struggle to change the form of democratic centralism as the prerequisite for the fullest development of inner-party democracy which in turn lays the foundation upon which all facets of democratic life will be able to develop and enrich society and with minimal risk to revolutionary gains.

Democratic centralism, as the established organisational principle of the party, can be regarded as centralism supported by democracy and democracy with centralised guidance. But to the degree that it is subverted by authoritarian practice *at higher levels* so we tend to get centralism supported by centrally directed democracy.

The continuing resistance to changing the form of democratic centralism is considered to be correct because the party, with its common ideology and with no class antagonisms is able to settle differences by democratic discussion. It is argued that because of this, centralism and democracy, leadership and rank and file, are complementary in character and not antagonistic and on that understanding a highly centralised structure is retained. Proposals put forward for dealing with authoritarian practices at higher levels are rejected on the grounds that they underestimate the need for strong leadership or express a certain mistrust of leadership.

Conversely, however, it can be argued that to retain a highly centralised organisation in situations which do not warrant such organisation

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indicates a certain lack of confidence in the rank and file. In fact, authoritarianism exists at all levels, but it is a problem more easily dealt with in the simple "direct vote" organisation of a party branch. It follows that the higher the committee the greater the problem, until, at the top, authoritarian attitudes entail a great restriction on inner party democracy and the subsequent development of socialist democracy. From the top, concepts and instructions are "handed down", members are "disciplined" and perpetuation of outlook consolidated by the ostracism of dissidents.

But how does this happen if what the defenders of the present centralist organisation say is true?

Within the Party

We do have a common ideology and we do have discussion towards decision, but one major factor has been ignored, namely, that all fundamental issues of the class struggle permeate the party in ideological form. (One can understand certain comrades ignoring this ideological form of the class struggle, in the atmosphere of 1957, when revisionist ideas were being put forward that not only undermined the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat but also rejected democratic centralism and called for freedom for all trends). Revolution begins with inner party struggle, for a correct ideological position must be established in order to determine policy and strategy. It is a struggle, intense in character with standpoints that objectively support or undermine the capitalist class, advance or retard the revolutionary struggle. This is the reality of antagonism and the reason why checks and safeguards will have to be created to control abuses by well intentioned but fallible beings.

Leadership groupings, from an ideological platform, unfortunately do manipulate democratic centralism to gain majority support for the crushing of opposition to their "correct" standpoint alongside "proving" how democratic the whole process really is. Authoritarian practices by leadership groupings is descernible in a variety of ways although we must remember that these practices operate alongside legitimate democratic practices. The means that are used include undermining the principle of balanced leading collectives, self-elevation above Congress, the channelling of democratic expression into pre-determined directions and inhibiting the dissemination of views through the party press. In this manner, authoritarians objectively attack the principle of democratic centralism and we get the vicious circle of centralism supported by centrally directed democracy, in which an atmosphere is created ensuring that dissident criticism is regarded as destructive and attacking the party. Although in a pre-revolutionary period such practices can sometimes have the effect of stifling initiative and reducing morale, of more importance is that they engender a level of acceptance to centralist authority, which in a socialist society becomes disastrous, for centralist authority is then qualitatively advanced on being augmented by the security and administrative forces of the socialist state. The inner ideological struggle then takes on the character of a physical confrontation.

There are a few essentials needed for the organisational principle of democratic centralism. These would include:

1. Decision by majority binding on all.
2. Control of factional activity.
3. Balanced collectives at all levels.
4. A single national leadership.

To ensure the continuation of these essentials whilst inhibiting illegitimate centralist power would require a reorientation of rules in order to close up the openings for authoritarian practices.

It is not true that basic antagonisms do not exist in the party. They do, and in a most acute ideological form. It becomes imperative therefore to develop an organisational structure around democratic centralist essentials that will not only severely limit the abuse of elected power but which will be sufficiently flexible to democratically contain differences.

COMMENT

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Such action would reduce the need for safeguards exterior to the party which brings us to the second point concerning the freedom for all trends approach of our present policy and strategy.

At the time of the last national discussion in the party on problems of inner party democracy, in 1957, it was admitted that there had been a tendency to over-emphasise centralism and under-emphasise democracy and that mistakes and shortcomings needed to be removed from inner party life. Certain very minor reforms of party organisation were introduced at that time with declarations that the dialectic of democratic centralism should be and would be adhered to in the future. Everything, it was implied, would be alright "provided that we understood that the problem goes deepeer than the assurance of formal rights". These most laudable sentiments of that time, however, overlooked that intensity of ideological struggle, those antagonisms which are the motive for authoritarian practices.

Socialist Strategy

As a result, an important decision was taken which brought about a "separation" between questions of inner party democracy and questions of socialist democracy in general. Since the taking of that decision the party has worked on elaborating a policy and strategy which would also be linked to solving the problems associated with the extension of socialist democracy, maturing in the revised *British Road to Socialism*. In this, we envisage a development and extension of socialist democracy by the granting of political freedoms in all directions and at all levels in socialist society, involving a dogmatic assumption that the capitalist class will be defeated by political means without the coercive power of the socialist state being required. We admit the tendency to authoritarianism but advocate counterbalancing abuses by measures of freedom that are exterior to the party. Our programme promises that the socialist state will guarantee freedom of information, expression and ideas to all including the political formations of the class enemy, the essence of which is to attempt the solving of democratic problems from a non-class standpoint, that is, from a revisionist standpoint in rejecting the need for the party of the working class to combine both political and state power methods for socialist advance.

Probably the most recent authoritative statement on this question was that made by John Gollan at the International Communist Conference when he stated that "Our proposals regarding Parliament and the rights of opposition parties is connected with the way we see the struggle for socialism in British conditions. The working class *will* defeat these parties politically" (my emphasis). Dogmatic statements of this kind are necessary, of course, for if we were to admit the possibility of the class enemy defeating the *working class* politically, we would be faced with the embarrassing question as to when the state power instruments would be used to prevent a reversal to capitalism.

Leading Role

We also have the declared intention, in the *British Road,* that the Party will not seek an exclusive position of leadership. But an exclusive position would give the party effective control over the instruments of state power. Preceding his statement, referred to above, John Gollan made the following reference to the issue of state power:

"A mass movement capable of winning a parliamentary majority and a government pledged to socialism would also have the power to defend that majority against subversion from any quarter whatever, using whatever means are necessary for its defence".

What happens in a crisis situation with counter-revolution becoming a real possibility? Presumably, if these different elements who are in control of the state apparatus cannot be won by the Party for decisive coercive action, the situation will be determined by political struggle. Yet experience shows that no revolution can succeed with the leadership of the revolutionary class giving up the right to combine state power and political measures. Comrade Gollan is tackling these issues of socialist democracy in non-class terms. He is, in fact, putting forward a concept of total freedom within a pluralistic socialist society with the party sharing leadership and with a state of shared power.

The class approach to the extension and development of socialist democracy, however, must necessarily be bound up with the recognition that, in the final analysis, state power is not wielded by the ruling class as a whole but by the political leaders of that class, sometimes without full reference to the opinion of that class.

The class approach envisages a special, leading position for the party of the working class in the context of socialist democracy with the party both safeguarding the security of the socialist state and acting as the disciplined, democratic concensus body for the revolutionary class.

The class approach to authoritarianism must surely proceed from the development of inner party democracy as the pre-requisite for the development of socialist democracy.

Authoritarianism is disruptive, it weakens the party, with personalities and elitist groups placing

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themselves above the party, pressurising the membership and undermining the democratic functioning of the party, particularly as far as collective leadership is concerned.

To limit the scope for authoritarian practices, particularly at top level and *by rule*, would strengthen inner party life and the organisational principle of democratic centralism. Alongside this and as part of a general re-direction of strategy we would need a political struggle to defeat revisionist ideas that belittle the leading role of the party and that attack the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Two Possibilities

It would seem then, that we are faced with two possibilities.

The first, is to retain a party organisational structure that is highly centralised in character and then try to counterbalance the authoritarianism that makes use of that structure by applying revisionist ideas on essential issues of state, democracy and class struggle in terms of pluralism and shared power in the socialist state.

The second, is to revise the party organisational structure, to strengthen inner party democracy on the basis of democratic centralism by organisational safeguards against authoritarianism and to retain Marxist-Leninist principles concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leading role of the party.

The first possibility is the essence of our present theoretical position. It is contradictory and as far as shared power is concerned would hardly be adhered to in a crisis situation and probably because of that it fails to get a sympathetic response from many who are seeking a revolutionary alternative to capitalism.

The second possibility, the point of this article, is put forward as a basis for discussion for determining a fresh position that aims to combat authoritarianism at its source in the party as the logic for combating authoritarianism in the socialist state, to maintain class clarity on the development of socialist democracy.

There can be no guarantee in a revolutionary period but that is surely all the more reason not to attempt to make promises that run counter to historical experience. The development of socialist democracy is related to specific circumstances and if we are to ensure that the quality of democratic participation will be in accord with the possibilities it will be necessary for us to face the realities of proletarian dictatorship which necessitates the exclusive, leading role of the party.

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